Cracking the Code: How Top Students Revise for GCSE English

Dominic Salles

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Dominic Salles still lives in Swindon, with his workaholic wife Deirdre. His jiu-jitsu-loving ex-engineer son, Harry, has moved to Shoreditch and lives on the site of Shakespeare's first theatre, The Curtain. Destiny. For those of you who remember Bob, he is now an ex-dog. It is curtains for him also.

His daughter Jess has just moved to New Zealand where the surf is better. He spent three months in Andorra last year, learning to snowboard. He is not as cool as he thinks.

His sister Jacey is an actress, famous for her Spanish accent, on your TV screens in shows like Casualty and Cold Feet. She would be hilarious in her own YouTube channel. Tweet her to let her know.

His YouTube channel, Mr Salles Teaches English, has reached 130,000 subscribers and had over 20 million views, about which he is childishly excited. 30% of his viewers said they improved by at least 3 grades in 2022.

He drives a Toyota Prius and has solar panels this year to offset his enormous carbon footprint. It won't be enough.

He has a newsletter which gives away top grade resources every week except the summer holidays, when he uses up all the carbon. The newsletter is mrsalles.substack.com. It's free.

Other Grade 9 Guides by Mr Salles

Language

The Mr Salles Guide to **100% at AQA GCSE English Language**
The Mr Salles Guide to **Awesome Story Writing**
The Mr Salles Quick Guide to **Awesome Description**
The Mr Salles **Ultimate Guide to Description**
The Mr Salles Quick **Guide to Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**
The Mr Salles **Ultimate Guide to Persuasive Writing**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 1 Question 2**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 1 Question 3**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 1 Question 4**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 1 Question 5**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 2 Question 2**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 2 Question 3**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 2 Question 4**
The Mr Salles Guide to 100% in AQA GCSE **English Language Paper 2 Question 5**

20 Top Grade GCSE Story Plots: Boost Your Grade with the Secrets of Structure

Literature
The Mr Salles Guide to **GCSE English Literature**
Study Guide Mr Salles Analyses **Jekyll and Hyde**
The Mr Salles Ultimate Guide to **Macbeth**
The Mr Salles Guide to **An Inspector Calls**
The Mr Salles Ultimate Guide to **A Christmas Carol**
The Mr Salles Ultimate Guide to **Romeo and Juliet**
Mr Salles **Power and Conflict** Top Grade Essay Guide (AQA Anthology): 11 Grade 9 Exam Essays!

Online Courses

mrsallesteachesenglish.teachable.com

Books on Teaching

The Full English: How to be a brilliant English teacher
The Slightly Awesome Teacher: Using Edu-research to get brilliant results
The Unofficial Ofsted Survival Guide
Differentiate Your School: where every student learns more

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So Just How Do Students Get Grades 8 and 9 in English?

In 2023, 55% of my viewers reported being awarded grades 8 and 9. That's slightly mind boggling. Another 22% got a grade 7. 77% got a grade 7-9.

Ok, but what if only top set students watch my channel? In grammar schools, that figure was only 59%. That's a massive difference.

22% improved by 3 grades (or more) from their mocks. Another 24% went up by two grades.

How on earth are they doing it?

Sure, they watch my videos and read my guides. But:

1. What do they do with the information?
2. How do they stay motivated?
3. How do they revise?
4. What information do they focus on?

Let's find out …

The 3 Types of Student

There are 3 types of student. Work out which one best describes you. Then you can see which revision tactics best fit your personality.

Lover:

Loves reading, analysing the characters' motives; delights in the author's playing with language. Knows the writer's methods, and is keen to figure out how these help the author promote their ideas or challenge the reader. They probably love writing, being creative, and imitating good or great writing which they read, be it novels, poetry or essay writing.

There used to be lots of students like this until the new GCSE was invented in 2015, and English became a barren wasteland of question methods and quote exploders, description questions and paragraph structures.

But some students still make it through this desert and drink at the refreshing, life-giving oasis of English.

Worker:

Loves being successful, and realises that hard work pays off. Often they play a lot of sport or music, where they realise everything is hard when you start, but when you put your mind to it, so much is possible. They buy in to as many question methods, mnemonics, exam tactics as they can. They make lots of revision notes, or flashcards, and above all do practice questions. They tend to start revising early.

Sometimes, through making amazing progress in their hard work, they find a voice, and a passion, and become a Lover.

Entrepreneur:

Loves systems, hacks and short cuts. They are not necessarily lazy, but they want the maximum profit for the minimum cost. They are willing to work hard, as long as that guarantees a great grade. That only works if you work hard at the right things.

Often, the right things don't involve working hard at all, just working smart. They get just as much pleasure from finding out what works as from getting the grade.

What I Want to Discover

Which one of these are you?

Read how these three groups revise. All revision works. But you'll stick at it much better if you choose the revision methods which best fit your personality.

Will these revision strategies be different?

Can you get a grades 8 and 9 with smart work instead of hard work?

Let's find out.

All the students you are about to read took GCSE in 2023, when grade boundaries returned to pre-Covid levels.

(Don't worry, I'll summarise it all at the end (page 132) in case you are an Entrepreneur and just want to skip to the 'just tell me what I need to know, I'm in a hurry man' part).

Grade 9

Lover

@jojomooc

You deserve the holiday! 2 9s in English and 7 marks off full marks in literature!!! I can't thank you enough.

I would've been lost without your language videos; they provided a methodical approach which doesn't seem to ever be taught.

Even with MLD and the R and J question catching me off guard, I was still able to apply half of your prediction videos.

A Level literature is the next endeavour! :)))

1) Pre plan

1. Practise writing essays that you can use no matter the question. I found this harder for Romeo and Juliet but narrowed it down to two themes.
2. I practically wrote the same essay for An Inspector Calls and Jekyll and Hyde that my teacher previously gave me 9s for.
3. ALWAYS PRE-PLAN A THESIS STATEMENT FOR EACH TEXT, this serves as the introduction (you are now arguing about the author's intentions)
4. For Language, I pre-planned my story and did it first.
5. I used the prompt in my flashback which was quite easy to adapt to.
6. Also, always use a cyclical structure.
7. I started memorising my story about a week before the exam, in the half term, which was plenty of time.

2) Just write

Even if you've filled up the space, you can always ask for extra paper! As long as you write a lot, at least some of your points will be convincing/critical. The L5 will become a L6 when it is sustained. This is the most efficient way to gain marks.

Don't worry about writing things that are wrong, always include an alternative interpretation if you can!

For Lang, I wrote a lot for Q4 as I again, treated it as a point system. However, a perceptive, in depth interpretation can also gain the same amount of marks as several points.

There needs to be some cohesion in the Q4 so it is like an argument. Therefore, writing a one sentence introduction helps the examiner to see this.

3) Scour for different interpretations/ideas

For literature, I used several YouTubers (although mostly Mr Salles) to find alternative interpretations for quotes and understanding characters.

Also, relating context to the personal lives of the writer and their intentions is useful. I found a lot of context on, for example, Stevenson's life or the political climate post WW2. (Buy Mr Salles' guides, they're great for this).

For language I tried to use cultural capital in Paper 2, Q5, and topical issues (in my case, the ULEZ charge).

I also made sure my story in Paper 1 had a message/extended metaphors. Make sure to make a plan which is aimed at the examiner and don't cross it out! For example, tell them that you are including an extended metaphor, or cyclical structure. This can also serve as a reminder for you.

Poetry tips because it's one of the hardest parts of the exam (imo)

1) Always talk about structure/ form first, to get into the examiner's head.

2) Don't worry about writing equal amounts for each poem in the comparison, just write more about the one you know.

3) For the 8 marker, I did 3 paragraphs, each with a language technique and a comparison in each. This shows the examiner you structure your answers. Although at this point, just writing is also a solution as it is only 8 marks.

What I've learnt after two years of watching Mr Salles videos :))))

My Thoughts

It is just a delight to me to see my own advice so brilliantly summarised. And then to know that this has really helped to get a top grade.

The number one skill is writing speed. Look how often jojo refers to it.

I know this sounds ridiculous. All English teachers (including me) prefer quality over quantity. But the ***only*** time that is vaguely true is in Q5 of the language papers. Even here, though, for grades 8 and 9, answers are longer than grades 6 and 7. 300 brilliant words is better than a weaker 400 words. But a brilliant 400 words is awesome.

For literature, you can get grade 8 and 9 with 750 words. But 1000 words makes it almost inevitable. And it is like that all the way down to grade 5. The more you write, the higher your marks.

If you want to know about cultural capital, my Ultimate Guide to Persuasive Writing shows you in 11 grade 9 answers.

@lechelechuza6852

I got a 9 in English Language and an 8 in English literature! Thank you so much Mr Salles, your videos helped a lot! I was even feeling really ill in literature Paper One, so I feel really proud and lucky to have still done so well ��❤

1) **For English literature** don't worry about fitting in as many unique quotes as possible. I would recommend using common quotes you are familiar with and offer a unique insight into those instead of trying to squeeze an idea out of a niche quote, like squeezing an empty lemon ����

2) The exams are really fast-paced. Even when I did my mocks I didn't realise fully the speed I would have work at for the real thing. So even though you have to go quickly, don't rush.

Read the extract really carefully, even if it takes you 5 whole minutes.

And make a very short bullet point plan for every question, it will stop you overwriting and or getting confused and will help you work faster.

Language

3) Finally, maybe this will sound ridiculous but you can quite enjoy the exam when you get into the flow of it and relax.

You can pretend that you're a language critic like the man from Ratatouille if he reviewed writing instead of food if that helps, ����

Take it seriously but not too seriously, try to see it (especially English Language) as a puzzle with clues and not a long intimidating silent exam ��

For creative writing: enjoy it!!! That's the best part for me and I loved it.

Get creative so you don't get bored - if you like what you're writing it will show in the quality

+ (also, I never got a 9 in my mocks, I usually got 6s or 7s and some of my friends got lower than that and still had high GCSE results. So, it's not over until it's over and don't give up!)

����❤

My Thoughts

Lechelechuza feels about English as I do. Don’t be intimidated by the exam. Enjoy it. Be creative when you can: Q5 is literally 50% of all your marks!

I love the way Lechelechuza highlights speed. I laughed when they wrote about taking 5 minutes to read the extract as a long time. Most students don’t feel this way. But Lechelechuza is so right. Time yourself. I bet you can do it with practice.

Other students will recommend using niche quotes. You can do that. But Lechelechuza is right, it is how you link the quote to the writer’s methods and purpose which give you the mark.

@rosh2733

I went from around 7s in both literature and language to 9 in both!! Your revision videos and ideas are life savers, they provide so many insights into the exam!

Showed them to my best friend who was predicted 5 In literature and he got a 9 :)

Literature

I read through so many grade 9 essays, so my style of writing became better (including watching videos.

I also made a bank of quotes with set analysis.

I also wrote many practice essays, got my teacher to mark them so I could reflect on my writing. (This was not motivational at all as I was given back 6s but I kept with it and got the grade 9) :) good luck!!

As I said above, the main thing you can do is read through those grade 9 responses, it really helps you mould your writing into the same style, and shows you what exactly you should be saying in order to bag yourself a 9.

Something else you can do also is watch the YouTube videos to revise (this is where I find Mr Salles' vids the best) and especially for literature, really try to memorise the inferences in those videos, as inferences will get you a lot of marks, especially if they stick out amongst all those other students.

Language

For language, all I can say is it's crucial to know the structure of the paragraphs you're going to write for each question.

I personally like the structure "what how why" in which you say ***what's*** happening (almost like a point), ***how*** is the method the writer uses (or word class), and ***why*** is an inference/explanation.

Don't forget to make alternate inferences sometimes!! And although that's my structure, different ones work best for different people, so find one that suits you, and stick with it to get those grades!!

One last thing is to take it easy, it's important to actually enjoy the texts your studying for what they are, and not let schools sometimes boring, dragging way of teaching them get in the way of liking a beautiful piece work :)

My Thoughts

Look at what Rosh and Lechelechuza have in common. Take it easy. Enjoy being creative. Work hard at practice essays.

(These feel hard, because they are like an exam, but they are easy as you finish them in under an hour, get feedback and always get better!)

And they are also positive people. Lechelechuza felt ill, but did her best. She trusted the process and preparation. Rosh got grade 6s, which was 3 grades below what he wanted. But, he trusted the process and preparation.

Imagine being in a class where all students work this way!

If any teachers are reading this, Rosh loves English partly despite his lessons: “it's important to actually enjoy the texts your studying for what they are, and not let schools sometimes boring, dragging way of teaching them get in the way of liking a beautiful piece work :)”

I see this a lot, because year 10 and 11 is spent reading the texts in small junks, with loads of analysis and annotation. You would never read a book the way we make our students read it in class! We are taking gold and turning it into lead.

If you want to reconnect with the joy of English, my book The Full English will help you see a better way.

@user-rb9ui7ek9x

Thank you so much for your help, I have been watching your videos since year 7 because I desperately needed help as I was on a 6 and wanted around all 9s.

When I say I watched all your videos, I mean it.

After so much dedication and hard work I finally achieved 2 9s in both English language and literature. I'm unbelievably happy. Thank you so much.

The video that help me the most was probably the video analysis of Sanjay's essay. I have memorised all your grade 9 points and used them in my exam for success.

I ended up getting 8 9s and 2 8s in my GCSE.

Again, I want to thank you for all your hard work, you are a beautiful person. Also, I remember after all my English exams I looked at the ceiling while sitting in my chair and said thank you Mr Salles.

I know everyone says it but work hard since year 7 if English is not your thing. I’ve done that and had struggled till year 10. I only really got to grade 9 level in year 11, so don’t be discouraged.

Having someone who is willing to mark your work is an unfair advantage which everyone should have. My teacher said she is willing to mark whatever work, she even lied and said she loves marking. She’s a great person.

I used her to perfect every single English language question and my essay writing for English literature.

Last tip would be to memorise every Mr Salles video, so it is just pure instinct. For example, on one of Mr Salles video where he analysed a grade 9 student’s essay, I memorised a whole point of theirs and actually used it in my Macbeth exam.

An extra tip would be to slowly start to love English. I hated English at the start, but slowly came to love it, because it made me feel like a detective finding deeper analysis.

I managed to get 130 in English language and only 7 marks wrong in English literature because of it.

If you're watching Mr Salles, then you're set in getting the grade you want.

Some student said it the best on one of Mr Salles videos: 90% of the exam is done before you have even written the paper, it is simply about following his tips and your plan during the exam.

Mr Salles, I don't have my actual exam paper but I could send you model answers that my teacher has marked for each English Language and English literature question I did if you want.

Best wishes all.

My Thoughts

Think about anything you really enjoy doing that demands some skill. A sport, music, a craft, anything that required effort.

Now, did you fall in love with that thing on the first day, or did that love come as you got better at it, as you made mistakes and improved, as you found out that working hard on some key things helped you improve dramatically overall?

For me, I am the second kind of 'lover' for everything I can think of except skiing and snowboarding and weight lifting. I was born to love those things (and only be good at the last one of them, sadly).

But I love plenty of hard intellectual things: reading, writing, teaching, thinking, problem solving, YouTube, school leadership … all of which took so much painful effort. I'm User-rb all the way in these things.

We learn to love what we are good at. We become good by seeking shortcuts to success. The fastest shortcut is feedback.

Practise writing!

The Unfair Advantage

This is a phrase I have picked up watching Ali Abdaal. He means those things which are simply happy accidents, or interests we have developed, both of which give us an advantage over other people.

So, we have a natural advantage of being British. We live in one of the richest countries in the world. The poorest 10% of people in the UK would live a brilliant life in Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam – I'm not even touching on Africa. I visited Vietnam this year and there ***everybody has to pay to go to school***.

It doesn't take a moment to compare ourselves to people living in Ukraine to realise we are unbelievably lucky. I was a kid on free school meals, homeless for 17 months, I only arrived here when I was 10. My wife was much worse off than me as a kid, often living in care and foster homes. But there were social services, free school meals, and we lived in one of the greatest cultural cities in the world, London.

Partly I'm talking about perspective and the current fashion to accept any kind of worry as anxiety, and any difficulty as trauma. Many psychological studies show we choose a narrative to describe our experiences. We can choose to see the world as against us – and then it will be. Or we can choose to see how lucky we are, and obstacles can be overcome with hard work. And we will overcome.

It is natural to worry. It is inevitable that we will face problems. Find a way. Or a dozen ways. Successful students don't buy into this idea of anxiety and trauma.

But, never mind that, what else are unfair advantages?

You are great at reading – reading in the exam is going to be easy, so you have an advantage over someone who knows more, but runs out of time, because they read slowly.

You've come from a family where parents talk to you every day, take you to museums, the theatre, art galleries – make the most of this, as you will have a much wider vocabulary and cultural capital. Use it.

You have your own room to study in – you lucky, lucky student – so use it to make sure that you prepare well.

Your parents aren't sending you out to earn money. So spend your time trying to improve your knowledge or your skills – learn sport, or music, develop a passion for learning coding, or painting, or riding a unicycle, whatever it is. You will learn great habits, concentration and an unshakeable belief that effort + practice + feedback = success.

You have friends who also want to do well – revise with them, test each other (if you want to, compete).

You have a teacher who is desperate for you to do well (even if you don't like the teacher, or if their lessons are boring – this is still true). Use them. Ask them stuff. Give them exam practices to mark.

You have someone in your life who will be happy to test you – a sibling, parent, friend – get them to test you.

You have a phone. Blurt. Speak into 'Notes' on Apple, or 'Evernote' on android. Record your ideas at the end of each school day, to make you remember stuff.

You have a phone! A personal computer that has more tech than NASA had for the moon landings. Watch videos and immediately make notes on what you have learned. Put them on 1.5 speed and learn more quickly.

You have WhatsApp – invite 4-5 friends who want to do well, and commit to adding one interesting idea or resource every Monday and Friday.

As you can see, I could go on and on and on, because that is how many natural advantages you have!

@ivyhockley5256

I got my 9, thank you so, so much :D

Watching your videos on the different papers to get more unique views and ideas definitely was the most important thing!!

It was a great help, especially to refresh the night before and keep it ticking over!

Re-analysing the texts like Inspector Calls in a fresh book also was something I hadn't done before but think helped lots - because your opinions about things can change in the two years and I strongly feel you'll do the best if you're happy and interested in what you're writing about!

Finally, writing a ton in the exam.

I usually write quite a lot, but as I did all my revision for everything on paper, like writing quotes or mini summaries, I got a lot of practice just writing without stopping for hours on end!

I think it helped me average around 17 pages per exam!!

Finally, finally, be confident in what you write the first time. If you need time to organize your thoughts, take a minute to do that before writing anything because then you might end up unhappy with it and restarting.

So I'd definitely recommend YouTube, writing out quotes from your memory or keeping aside literature points and ideas that you want to write about and most of all, practice writing lots!!

Time passes very quickly in an exam hall and if you're confident in the text and your ideas, you don't want to lose out because you couldn't write everything major that you wanted to :))

Thank you again Mr Salles!!!:)

My Thoughts

I just love this. Ivy wants to enjoy English. To do that, she realises she just needs to learn interesting ideas. She uses videos to think about these and come up with her own ideas. This makes the books come alive.

And then the fastest hand wins the duel. Just write. Get fast. It is just practice.

She knows that points make prizes. She can afford to write something which isn't perfect, because here's another idea, and here's another, and oh, look, here's another.

Tick, tick, tick goes the examiner's pen. All examiners are trained to ignore the stuff that is wrong. And, when you read the answers AQA publish, sometimes the examiners don't even know it is wrong, and you get the marks for that too!

@redvelvet90754

Hi sir, thank you so much for your content! I achieved both 9s in language and literature, and you were my main source of revision and help.

I’m off to do English literature and language at a-level, so thank you so much again. I truly believe it was your videos which raised me from 6 and 7 to 9!

- Definitely your quote videos, especially for Romeo & Juliet,
- I often analysed past questions and wrote opening thesis,
- and probably reading more books for language.

Thank you again and I hope you have a nice rest of the summer ��

My Thoughts

Redvelvet could be in the entrepreneur section. They sound like they haven’t bothered writing out full essays under exam conditions for revision.

Instead Redvelvet has focused on the key things which make a difference:

1. Know your quotes

2. Know exactly what interpretations you want to say about them, linking to the author’s purpose and their methods.

3. Practise and memorise your thesis statements because they include what you want to argue about the author’s purpose. A thesis statement acts as your essay plan.

But, Redvelvet is in the Lover section because of their last comment. Read books for language! This will stop you writing the garbage descriptions I read all the time. Garbage can get you grade 7. But real writers don't write the way description is taught in so many schools.

Learn to write like your favourite books. You'll instantly get grade 9. But, and this is the real reason to do it, you'll enjoy it, and get good at a worthwhile skill.

My Ultimate Guide to Description shows you how to do this, and love writing.

My Guide to Question 5 shows you how students ***actually get each grade***, with dozens of real exam answers. If you aren't interested in being a brilliant writer, but just want the grade, this is for you.

@CharlieUnderscore

Ended up getting the highest grades in the school this year! My two 9s in English are fully down to you. I barely scraped a 6 in the mocks before watching you.

1. I became very invested in context for literature, as I didn't even know that was a thing before watching you and found it to be a genuinely interesting aspect of literature pieces.

2. Your slightly unorthodox tips about how to lay out language responses in bullet points etc.

3. Watching your videos on past grade 9 answers to pinch vocab and phrases. (This one is likely the most useful)

4. Being encouraged through your videos to practise a lot more than I ever would've before - you had me interested enough to dedicate a lot of time to my English studies.

My Thoughts

I started making videos in 2011. They didn't start making money till 2022. Money didn't keep me going.

At first they were just 'teach the kids what they need to know for the exam'. That couldn't keep me going.

I saw the writing on the wall. When I started English teaching, we wanted our students to be brilliant at reading and writing and to love English.

Get this: there were ***no exams!*** And English was ***harder*** then. You had to write 10 pieces of coursework, each of about 2000 words. You really had to know how to think about the author's ideas, and how to structure an essay as an argument.

But at the end of it, you were a good writer and reader. And you had loads of ideas, and had studied ‘the best of what has been thought and said’. You might not love English, but you left school prepared for life.

A level English was the number 1 choice, the most popular A level in the country.

And what was the writing on the wall? We had a new exam now, and we would just teach towards it. Each question would have some ridiculous method, which had little to do with being any good at English. The essays would be short, and therefore limited in ideas and understanding.

And so, I stared to make videos full of ideas, which would help students appreciate their books, open them up to a whole range of experience, language and thoughts not taught in most classrooms.

The new GCSEs began in 2015, and you didn’t even have to learn to write an essay. Students stopped being taught so much about English. They began to see the subject as just a collection of hoops to jump through for each question type.

They stopped choosing to do A level. A level English is now so unpopular that it has fallen to 12th choice!

That’s why I make the videos and write the guides. This section comes first because I want you to realise you can see beyond the exam methods to the actual subject.

And if you just get good at reading and writing, you can breeze the exam. If you love reading and writing, you can breeze life.

I think this was a reply to @sazahx6817

For literature I got a 9 so can also help.

In English literature, it's just for me making flashcards for each scene and putting the work in to keep looking over them and test with a parent,

It's the self-discipline and dedication to hard work to achieve. Nothing else. Keep going - throughout year 11 and the 24th or so August will be one of the best days of your life!

Also blurt the night before all your ideas and knowledge. This helped hugely.

My last tip I told no one else, as its survival of the fittest. I wanted to do better than others.

Make up your own ideas and thoughts that are not on the internet.

And my last point is GO SEE THE PLAYS. They change your perception of the whole plays/texts and you can implement these into your essays. Go see the plays, I can't say it enough. Try go with a parent and make it an enjoyable night out, maybe go to a Nandos or somewhere you like to eat, so it’s more of an experience and enjoyment rather than an educational boring thing. Then you'll love it and engage in it more!

Good luck and work hard from day one and you will succeed. It is the dedication, hard work and discipline to keep the work up that makes that long time off so rewarding. Good luck!!

My Thoughts

Plays can be expensive, I know. But turning it in to a family event is fun. Yes, this needs a bit of money. About once a month I go to the Oxford Playhouse, where front row tickets are less than the cost of a cinema ticket!

But, let’s imagine you pay £40 instead of £10 (I know, it’s your mum’s money!) There’s nothing like seeing acting live, and watching a play lift from the page in all sorts of unexpected ways. The worst play you’ve ever seen is still fascinating. And it will become a habit you can return to again and again in life.

That’s what has made this student a Lover instead of a Worker.

Blurting is my favourite retrieval practice. You suddenly make all sorts of connections in what you know. And you instantly spot the gaps. Very quick and easy.

L.

Hi Sir,

This is a bit late but I honestly wanted to say a huge THANK YOU. I got a 9 in English literature, and a 7 in language.

I was at a 5 in English Literature in February.

I brought your guides and watched ALL the videos you had posted. The alternative interpretations on the texts were so, so good. My teachers thought I was joking when I said I wrote in my exam that “Mr Utterson may actually be a homosexual” ha ha.

Honestly though sir, I was so bad at literature, especially because honestly, I didn’t enjoy reading the texts and then just doing simple analysis on some quotes.

When I came across you and your analysis of it, I honestly began enjoying literature and how so much can be got from one quote and how important the context is!

I ended up getting 59/62 in my paper 1 Literature. I was speechless, my teachers couldn’t believe it either, as I was predicted a 5

You help all us students so, so much. I am so grateful for all your hard work; good luck sir with whatever you do next. I’ll probably never watch your videos again but you made me love and enjoy literature in such a short amount of time!

Thanks again,

L

1) In terms of Literature I would say I improved because I started thinking critically and out of the box, I wasn't stating the obvious. To do this I simply watched your videos

2) Loads of people struggle with structure. Nearly all my teachers taught me I should write 3 paragraphs in a PEAS structure, meaning I would end up with 3 quotes for my whole essay.

This simply doesn't get you a good grade. Instead I think you should structure with a START/MIDDLE/END kind of structure and have at very least 10 quotes in your plan.

So if the question was "how ambitious is Macbeth?" talk about how ***at the start*** Lady Macbeth fuels his ambition, then how it becomes his downfall etc ***in the middle***.

So overall don't stick with a proper structure, instead remember the START/MIDDLE/END and include all quotes that you can remember and have analysed really well at home

3) For literature especially THE MOST important tip I could tell you is, how important it is to get a good night's sleep and a good breakfast.

For my paper 1 I went to bed at 10 and slept over 9 hours and had a really good breakfast. I only looked over my quotes on my way to school and nearly got full marks.

For paper 2 I did quite the opposite, slept at 1, didn't eat anything for breakfast and kept on revising quotes. I ended up being around 10 marks short and went blank in the exam multiple times.

It could be a coincidence but in my mocks I mostly got way higher in Paper 2 then Paper 1. One of my friends who ended up getting all 8s and 9s, told me after 9 he wouldn't touch a book before the exam and would go on a walk in the morning before the exam and only look over his book on his way to school. Well-being is really important.

4) For language I would say YOU NEED to prepare 2-3 stories that you can match with any questions that can come up. I did that, and when I got my exam paper straight away went to the last question and finished it in 20 minutes, as I had practised writing the stories months before. I ended up getting 35/40. Then spend the rest of the time on the other section.

5) For paper 2 question 5, I would suggest reading newspapers and magazines to stay up to date with latest news etc.

I would say you need to think differently, don't write what everyone else will, think differently. If the statement is "exams are really needed", 90% will agree and say yeah it helps prepare and test students. 10% would say no, and the added pressure is not needed on kids who do their SATS in year 2.

My Thoughts

I really like the advice on wellbeing. It is easy for teachers and students to forget this.

I also think learning to love thinking about the author's ideas and the characters is another way to feel wellbeing. There is nothing worse than studying something 'because you have to'.

If we meet interesting ideas, it is hard not to be interested (even if we prefer something else!)

That's why I make the videos.

Dear Mr Salles,

Attached is all the content I mentioned and am very happy to be used. I'm also happy to be named as Gabby.

As for my advice on how successful students revise, I have a couple of recommendations: (and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this!)

1) Understand the mark scheme.

Unfortunately, exams are not necessarily very good reflections of overall ability and being able to write answers that 'tick all the boxes', so to say, I found to be very important.

Good writing would not always get me good marks and that was because I included unnecessary things and forgot to include things that put a ceiling on the marks available to me.

Playing the exam board's game and writing not just a good answer, but a good answer *according to the mark scheme* is very important, I've found.

This got me used to and able to ballpark the amount of marks I would get for an answer, as well as recognise the quality (and therefore band) my answer was at while I was writing, giving me the ability to course-correct and adapt if necessary.

2) Read, if you can and still have plenty of time.

Short stories, novels, articles, fanfiction even. Getting yourself used to thinking about why authors made certain choices (especially structurally, which I think people often find hardest) is a great exercise in inference and makes it easier to look at an unknown piece of writing and identify reasons an author did something.

Being exposed to different kinds of text helps massively with writing as well. Wider reading is also amazing particularly about the lives of authors of literature texts and other pieces of context, because it humanises the name and period and makes it easier to think about why authors and the audience might've held certain views/opinions.

Having this general knowledge to draw from takes little effort (a short YouTube video or history flashcard set on Quizlet) but I saw a drastic improvement in my grade (from a low 7 to secure 9) once I started implementing context at a deeper level.

3) Use mind maps or similar techniques to link concepts,

Really learn them (rather than memorising them in isolation). I personally made mind maps for every character and linked them to as many themes as I could using quotes and pieces of context as specific as I could find to build an overall picture of why that character existed.

The same could be done for themes and trying to link to characters through quotes and context, but personally I find it harder to go deeper like this.

Thinking of characters as embodiments of themes and existing as a way to make the audience think/feel something specific helps a lot to deepen thinking.

Closer to the exam, writing out essay plans with the thesis statement, points, evidence and context you'd hypothetically use is super helpful for making sure essays are coherent, and have clear structure/purpose/one argument running all the way through.

4) Get comfortable with nuance.

For every interpretation of a character/quote/theme, try to consider an alternative implication, and figure out which you agree more with and why. This is super helpful for developing arguments and proving you can be evaluative and critical in your approaches, rather than word vomiting down the first interpretation Google offered.

Like anything, it's a skill to be developed. It will be hard to think of things at first, but listening to other people's interpretations and trying to link things you already know is a good place to start.

5) If you do or listen to nothing else, this is what I found to be the most important: quality over quantity when it comes to revision.

Copying down quotes is useless if you don't understand what they mean and what they say about that particular character/theme/author's viewpoint.

I revised maybe an hour a week for English on average and got a 9 in both literature and language, so I really think that time isn't as much of a factor as comprehension and critical thinking is.

However, I will say revision for mocks was absolutely crucial. I treated all my mocks as if they were the real thing and that allowed me to have to do very, very little close to my actual exam, because I had the exam skills mastered and the content learnt (it was just a matter of brushing up on certain things).

I have so much advice but I tried to limit myself only to what was absolutely key and applicable to as many people as possible.

I'm personally neurodiverse (have an ASD diagnosis) and I think systems I developed for coping with school/revision are very, very specific to how I know my brain to work and what motivates me, so it might not work for everyone.

Thank you for giving me the chance to share my advice, and I hope it may help someone out there secure the grade they're looking for!

Best regards,

Gabby

My Thoughts

- These approaches are so beneficial. Everyone can implement them.
- Gabby looks like she practised about 5 literature questions and two language papers.
- Her tips on how to have quality revision, rather than quantity revision are excellent.

But this is what I like best.

The Mocks

Treating these as the real thing taught her everything she needed to know about timings and exam technique.

But this also meant she had already learned everything she had been taught, and so finding the extras, like context, and alternative viewpoints, was easy.

She doesn't mention spaced learning, but this also helped massively. She would forget things after her mocks, but because she had built strong memories at this stage, later revision would be much, much quicker – things would be much quicker to remember when revisited.

If only teachers were also this logical.

Example:

What is the question least likely to be asked in 2024? The questions asked in 2023.

What literature paper will your teacher set for mocks in November or December 2023? The questions asked in 2023.

If teachers treated the mock as a retrieval practice of knowledge students will be tested on in 2024, they would ***never*** set the 2023 mock, would they!

PM

I remember stepping into March 2023 with a huge 'burden' of the English Lit GCSE exams on my shoulders. I was on a grade 4. I cannot believe I used to treat this subject as a burden.

Honestly my indelible transformation from the 4 to a 9 (A**) and achieving full marks in Eng Lit paper 1 in just under 2 months had been, well, indelible.

I recall that the study techniques I was using for English had been completely unnecessary and an utter time waste, especially when I thought that all this time I was being productive.

Luckily, Mr Salles videos and collabs with other English studytubers had been a lifesaver, when I actually started using them effectively by making as many mindmaps of possible themes and characters that could come up in the exam, any repetitions from previous years' themes (please take this one with a pinch of salt).

Then, I was actually becoming productive. I was excelling.

Tips I would recommend:

1. Be positive. Honestly. Your mindset can change half the game.

2. Please practice writing as many essays as you can:

3. Improved and neater handwriting (not that this is essential, but must be legible, of course)

4. Your pace is significantly faster, and ideas will most likely race into your mind as you write

5. You will be writing in the exam, not typing

6. Forget about everyone in the hall. You can remember them after that exam.

7. Even if your questions about the texts are stupid/seen as stupid by your peers (most likely not), ask your teachers for help - better than looking stupid on results day.

8. Memorise pre-prepared areas of speculation + explanations - make sure they are innovative and ORIGINAL

9. If your ideas are obscure, add them in. This is what will make your ideas stand out and unique. But if you cannot back them up, you will not get the mark.

10. Replicate exam conditions!!! (I remember playing a random 10hr 'exam pens writing noise' audio in the background while revising - so the exam situations don't stress you out).

11. Overconfidence will lead to ego, which will lead to failure.

Follow Mr Salles' content. End of discussion.

Oh, and yes, Mr. Salles' English guides? Haha, a masterpiece. You should be breathing those tips in and out.

Mr. Salles is an absolute gem and an incredible tutor that we can all luckily access online through his YouTube videos, his positive aura, and his "Hel-lo!" at the beginning of each of his videos are just the bare minimum of an incredible teacher he is!!

Thanks so much sir, and good luck to all those reading this! Now go smash that preparation and swiftly write in the exam.

PM.

My Thoughts

About 30% of my views for the year come just on the nights before each exam paper. I can look back all the way back to 2011. Students start their revision a little earlier now, but very, very few seem to have a real plan which is going to work.

This is their plan. I'll revise really hard the week before.

So do they revise much for their mocks? Not most students. Not a chance. 3 hours per subject would be exceptional.

This is where students wanting top grades can simply smash it out of the park. Revising for your mocks will mean you are way ahead of your peers.

PM doesn't tell us what study techniques she was using. Probably rereading, highlighting and maybe taking notes. Imagine working for your mocks, and still getting grade 4. So easy to give up. What's the point, right?

But, look at how she tackled the last two months. Total focus on techniques which work. I know for a fact that students aren't all jumping on my videos in March. Students don't start revising properly until the 8th of May. That's what my viewing figures show.

PM is kind enough to mention my guides. 55% of my viewers say they got a grade 8 or 9 in 2023. That's pretty insane. A further 22% say they got grade 7. 22% say they went up by at least 3 grades from their mocks, like PM.

Imagine what the figures must be for students who read the guides?

Ada

Hi Sir, don’t know whether you’ll see this but I just wanted to thank you so much for your help with my GCSEs. For the whole two years I had been stuck on a 7, even in my mocks and getting a 9 in English literature GCSE seemed nearly impossible for me.

After my mocks, I decided to start watching your vids more in depth and read your revision guides and that made such a difference for me.

Although I never really wrote anymore essays in the months building up to my GCSEs, I was still able to get a 9 in English literature, scoring 146/160 (could’ve been higher if I had more time to answer the 8 marker on paper 2����).

Even with reading all your guides and watching your vids, I still didn’t believe that I could get a 9, despite the fact you boast about all your students getting at least one grade higher. To be honest I didn’t really believe you lol.

But seeing that nine in English lit and knowing I got the highest in my year was more than I ever dreamed of, so I just want to thank you again.

Because of this, I have decided to take English lit for a level and I know you don’t make a level content which is really sad but if you could recommend any YouTubers that are even close to as good as you are I’d really appreciate it.

I just wanted to let you know to never stop making these vids because they do truly help and you do truly help people more than you’ll ever know.

If you have a postbox in which I could send you anything please let me know as I would love to do that.

Thanks once again sir,

Ada

My Thoughts

So, my daughter has moved to New Zealand, where she is teaching English. They do loads of coursework. She's been in the school for 5 weeks. One of her classes is the bottom set year 13 (who have to do English). She was told, 'None of them will pass.'

Anyway, she's just taught them an assessment, and quite a few of them have got merits – better than a pass. But, she looked at their previous assessment, with their previous teacher. 100% fail. Which means they fail the whole year.

How is this possible?

I think it comes down to this – show students how to do well, and they will. My daughter knows that. The previous teacher? Not so much. Yet, knowing that they were still going to fail the year, loads of the class still chose to believe in themselves this time round.

It's why I started my YouTube channel and why I write my guides. A student who is shown will find it easy to improve.

For many years this paid me nothing, and for a few more years, next to nothing. That's not why I did it. It's for students like Ada.

Few things beat an email like this. I would definitely recommend writing practice essays! But, I just love that Ada read my guides and watched my videos, and that was enough to get the highest marks in his year.

Even better, he is going to take A level.

It could be you next year.

@shinayahk1

Thank you so much Mr Salles your amazing teaching, ideas and videos have helped me achieve a grade 9 in literature. I'm especially grateful for your ideas about An Inspector Calls because I got 86/96 in paper 2.

I think writing your ideas from your video on a mind map and thinking about how it links to other places within the play.

And also expanding your ideas with my own. (This was very fun to do as your ideas are so unique and interesting)

Linking to wider perspectives or context of the 1945 society like Rousseau and Locke's theories and biblical allusions.

And referring to ideas as constructs.

Your top grade analysis on the specific characters and the 'is this the best An Inspector Calls video ever made' were really helpful too.

My Thoughts

Once you start developing your own ideas, you move from Worker or Entrepreneur to Lover.

When you start to link all your ideas together – as the mind map does – you have really powerful revision, and you suddenly understand the structure of the text.

@user38180

I went from two 6s to an 8 and a 9 by my own work, you and my teacher. Your videos have a different approach to all the others which actually works, so thank you !!

I did at least one essay a week from mocks until my exams which really added up to help me,

I also met with my teacher every two weeks to ask questions about all my work and anything I wasn't sure on.

I watched all your videos and all other English youtubers.

And I made complete notes + mind maps on everything.

So the essential lesson was hard work and proactivity…

But most helpful thing was the essays because by the exams I'd written one on basically every topic for all my books so I was prepared for anything!

My Thoughts

Ok, even I wouldn't work this hard! But, why is user38180 in the 'Lover' section?

Look how well they are using their teacher.

Teachers in England are much more likely to be jaded or exhausted. There are dozens of reasons for this, which I won't go into here. Students don't see their teachers as people, with real feelings and hopes. They don't realise that what every teacher wants is to make a difference.

When a student starts doing extra work, responds to feedback and tries to improve, teaching is the best job in the world. I'm not kidding. Use them. Appreciate them. Let them see they are making a difference to you.

Un-jade your teacher!

@elliemcdonnell9399

Mr Salles, I am so delighted to come back and say I got 2 9s in English because of you. I bought all of your revision guides and watched your videos religiously. Safe to say it payed off! Thank you so much for everything

I would say make sure to do as much of the activities as you can and revisit

- and reread,
- as well as watching the videos and taking notes.
- Highlight key points
- and practice putting them in your own words and into essays

My Thoughts

Much as I think my videos and guides give you awesome tips and in depth knowledge, they work best with practice essays.

The more of these you do, the more inevitable your grade will be.

Ellie also did the activities in my guides – I love that!

Worker

Hello Sir!

I am a student who just finished their GCSEs, and went from a Grade 4 to Grade 9 because of your videos! I achieved full marks on Literature Paper 2 and I know you often go through full mark essays on your channel, so you may like to use my essays.

I did An Inspector Calls and Power & Conflict Poetry.

Best wishes and thank you very much,

S

Top Tips

Making sure I had as many interpretations of single quotes as possible

Making sure I learnt key subject terminology specific to each text

Planning essay ideas for each theme and character, with a thesis for each and as many points I can think of (backed up by quotes)

Writing essays and getting my teacher to mark them and give me constructive feedback, then acting on this feedback and asking her to re-mark and repeating this until I got into the top band (27-30)

Reading your books! I made quote banks from them with brief interpretations (I usually used key words, such as “domination” for “my nyas” about the interpretation instead of writing it all out). I also tried to pick the lesser-known quotes (I was able to differentiate them as they hadn't been discussed in class), as I think that makes for a more interesting and complex response.

Your 5 key quotes and the FOSSE essay structure for poetry - I also planned FOSSE for every poem in note form, again using key words such as "ancient -> Napoleon desire for power -> Duke of Wellington"

Hope this helps!

My Thoughts

I bang on all the time about how it really is possible to get top grades, even for an ‘average’ student.

It is just knowing stuff, and hard work. That only comes with determination. When you hand in essays, and your marks keep creeping up, you feel successful. That gives you the motivation to continue.

Motivation hardly every comes first. Don’t wait to be inspired. It’s the other way around. And it doesn’t sound as though it was that much hard work for S, either!

Notice how S used their teacher, and simply chose to improve. S welcomed feedback, because they knew that this would mean they could improve.

S trusted the process and chose to believe in themselves. And it was a choice. No one getting grade 4 believes they are naturally gifted. S didn’t care about that. Hard work earns rewards.

But S didn’t waste time on hard work that wouldn’t improve them. S focused entirely on the key things which would have most impact.

Jinit Bafna

Dear Mr Salles,

I hope you had a great summer! I am sorry that I am slightly late but I'd like to express my warm appreciation for all your help with my GCSEs! Thanks to you and my English teacher, I received double 9s in the subject. In literature paper 2, I even received 96/96 with an overall score of 153!

I'd like to attach my exam paper to this email so that you can have a read as well!

Thank you again and I don't mind you sharing it with other pupils! I don't mind being named.

My top tips would be:

A lot of practice.

I was predicted a 7 at the end of year 9 in both English language and literature. I, then, attempted numerous past papers - even predicted papers, probably tried every single essay question possible for the literature texts which I even asked my teachers to mark and give me some feedback.

I improved on these feedbacks which made me much better at a subject that I used to seriously dread! Have the right mindset and no one can stop from having the double 9s at the end!

Learn the mark schemes

This way you can confidently deliver what the examiner wants. You must structure your answers according to the assessment objectives and be sure to be aware of the weightings, otherwise it might cost you marks!

Terminology and vocabulary

Ensure that you use top band terminology and vocabulary. For example, the examiner is likely to give better marks to a pupil that analyses the language technique ‘anaphora’ very well, than another student that has only analysed similes even if both have analysed at the same standard.

Being able to accurately identify nuanced techniques will illuminate your answers and make you stand out.

Timing

This is often a problem during English exams. Pupils aren't aware of how much time to spend on each question and thus often run out of time.

Personally, I followed your recommended time slots and order of questions for the language examinations and it worked perfectly for me. I ensured not to go over that time limit leading me nicely towards the end of the paper with plenty of time to double check!

Most importantly, the students need to listen to your advice.

You were a life saver during my examinations and I am sure this is the same for thousands of other pupils. Whatever advice you’ve given us works and my results are a strong evidence to back this up!

Hope this was helpful!

Thank you!

Jinit Bafna

My Thoughts

This is an interesting attitude to grade 9, isn’t it? Imagine not enjoying English, and then telling yourself that didn’t matter, you were going to write loads of practice essays till you nailed it. What drive!

To compensate for the pain, you will clearly improve with every couple of essays, in fact, probably every essay. This improvement is motivational.

Put it another way – it is pretty much a 100% guarantee that you would get grade 9 if you practised the past papers like this.

At the end of that you will have learned some interesting things about yourself:

- You know how to guarantee success – practising the right things.
- You know you are able to succeed even in subjects you don't enjoy.
- You will be in a position to decide if the reward was worth the effort.

These lessons will serve you for life. It's so much more than a GCSE, when you look at it this way.

Haitham

Hello sir, I hope you are well. I contacted you on YouTube regarding my top grades: thanks to you and my English teachers ��

Attached below are my scripts in English Literature and English Language. My highest was paper 2 Literature: 96/96.

Many thanks,

Haitham,

Before I do give my top-tips, I want to say that I was not always a grade 9 student. At the beginning of year 10, I was attaining grade 4s in English Literature and English language, so getting a grade 9 seemed like a pipe dream.

I also want to say that your emphasis on conceptualised responses and writing about the author's purpose has really helped me step up from a grade 6 to a grade 9.

Having said that, what I am about to share was invaluable to my success at GCSE, across all subjects:

(1) Find your purpose and be driven to learn:

All successful people have a positive mindset to how they approach their goals. My goal was to achieve a grade 9, but I wouldn't have been able to do that without a solid purpose and a mental drive. I was always underachieving in subjects from year 7 to year 10, so my purpose was to prove everyone wrong and show that I was capable. In times where I wasn't bothered to revise, I would think back to this and it would fuel me to put in the work.

(2) Don't limit yourself to school resources:

School gives you the bare minimum. Yes, your teachers want you to be successful but you only see them once every day and the learning tends to be fast-paced.

If you truly want to reach the top 10% and get a grade 9, you need to be more resourceful and use online revision resources like Mr Salles' channel and guides to give depth to what you learn in school.

(3) Revise interpretations of quotes and do quote explosions:

Schools tend to furnish you with very basic interpretations of quotes so it is in your hands to take initiative and develop those ideas. Mr Salles is an excellent source of grade 9 quote interpretations. What is special about them is that it gives the examiner every reason to award you the marks as they are perceptive and developed.

If you want to memorise these interpretations, you must do quote explosions. To make it easy, start with word-level analysis then start incorporating different interpretations.

(4) Plan, write, mark:

If you really want a grade 9, you should be writing and planning an essay a week as a bare minimum. You should then give it to your teacher to mark and they can give you feedback on how to improve.

At the beginning of year 11, I would plan my essays with quote explosions with the quotes I would use. I would then give myself 50 minutes to write an essay and then would email it to my teacher for marking.

They would give me feedback, which helped identify my areas of weakness. With the weaknesses identified, I would then go back and use online resources like Mr Salles' channel to help refine that particular area.

I would then do another essay the following week, implementing my new changes till I did my absolute best.

(5) Discuss quotes, ideas and interpretations with English teachers:

Discussing what you're trying to develop can really help you cement your ideas. I would always speak to my English teacher, the head of English at my school and- fortunately- my form tutor was also an English teacher. They are the subject specialists with degrees, so why not benefit from their expertise?

(6) Stay humble:

Arrogance is always a barrier to improvement. You need to keep an open mind and acknowledge that you are not perfect. As tempting as it may be to get ahead of yourself as a result of, say, your success in mocks (getting grade 9) there is always room for improvement and it should never be taken as an indication that you shouldn't revise the subject as much anymore.

If you get a grade 9, great, but you need to now focus on maintaining that. Maintenance is hard because you have set yourself the golden standard, so NEVER get complacent.

But, say you don't get a good grade in mocks and feel really demotivated. Don't worry. Just keep practising and stay consistent with revision and you will be guaranteed your desired results.

It sounds like really wishy-washy advice, and I would have thought the same in your position at the beginning of Year 11 as a grade 6/7 student, but if you follow through with all the tips, there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't achieve the top grades.

It's like exercise, if you stay consistent with your programme, you will naturally achieve results. It is bound to happen.

My Thoughts

Let's forget English for a minute.

How well do you think Haitham is going to do at life?

Has he learned lessons which will benefit him well into adulthood? When he meets difficulties, will he enjoy trying to overcome them, or work hard and hate every minute of it?

I can only come up with a positive answer to each of these questions.

So, even if English is not your thing, Haitham's approach could be just what you need. It really depends on how you choose your purpose.

@anthonydonnelly-trimble1184

I want to leave my thanks here; I was always good at English Language (expected 9) but was struggling with literature (usually hovering around a 7).

I used your videos and actually achieved a 9 in literature (151/160), but I definitely did worse than I could've because I didn't answer the 8 mark unseen poetry comparison ��

Regardless, I would not have done so well without you, and I strongly encourage everybody to use your videos ����

Apologies if the comment is quite lengthy.

Revision

First, consistency is key. Try not to get all of your revision in last minute, rather look over your notes regularly for at least maybe 2 months leading up to the exam.

The week leading up to the exam I would strongly advise reading over your notes daily, maybe more than once, also perhaps watching recap videos as well.

On the morning of the exam, watch a recap of whatever text you're being examined on and look over some key quotations one last time.

Secondly, most improvement is made at home (at least in my experience), so stop depending on your teachers for everything.

This means you should take it upon yourself to do further research at home on the context of your texts, as well as different interpretations, etc.

Watching your videos (and others') is a great way of doing this, but you can also quite literally search for important events at the time of the text being written, or when it is set (for context).

In the Exam

A very simple tip: if during the exam you feel overwhelmed, take 20 seconds to recollect your thoughts and ensure you are crafting a logical and efficient argument, the last thing you want to happen is you to start losing quality in your writing.

And if you truly panic (like I did when I saw My Last Duchess, I quite literally didn't write for 20 minutes), do not give up and sit defeated, rather start writing because you will get back into your rhythm again.

Literature

Final quick fire tips:

1. for unseen poetry, caesura and enjambment are your best friends for easy structural points;

2. use exemplar essays (if you can get ahold of them, some are in Mr Salles' books I believe) as references for new ideas;

3. do not start an argument with context, rather weave it in to your arguments which start from the text (quotes) to strengthen them and reveal the writer's social purpose;

4. commit to memory quotes which cover multiple themes and can show relationships between multiple characters;

5. lastly, everyone's favourite thing, do practice questions.

Again, apologies for how long this comment is, there is really so much advice I can give and I don't know if I'm able to fit it into a comment whilst explaining it clearly

�� Thank you for the help with the GCSEs, I hope I could give some decent advice to those who may need it. Feel free to ask me for further clarification about anything mentioned ��

My Thoughts

I love the smart approach to quotes which can be used for multiple themes and characters. My videos deal with a lot of these.

I want to point out that it is the practice essays which probably made most difference. Looking at your notes is reassuring, but it doesn’t make you remember and apply what you know. Essays do.

Orlando

Dear Mr salles, thank you very much for the help this year, I got grade 9 in my literature exam. In paper 2, I missed 1 mark and therefore want to let you use it in your videos if you want to.

In my mocks I got 4 in literature and 5 in language and ended up achieving 8 in language.

Literature

I used sticky notes where I wrote the top 20 quotes for each book/play.

I also linked each one of them with the themes they fit in.

I can share my workbook once I arrive back which shows all the quotes and themes I remembered.

Obviously, it takes a lot of time to learn the quotes off by heart but if background information on why they were said is understood, I think it will start becoming more natural (my memory isn't good and I managed to learn it all - so everything is possible if the student wants to achieve the top grades)

For practice essays I really worked on getting my thesis written quickly and having 3 main points to include in it.

3 paragraphs is just the right amount of words to get full marks, so 3 points are needed as well to include in the thesis.

I also remembered some keywords e.g. Shakespeare constructs Macbeth, Employs Macbeth etc which make my first impression and intro sharp.

I had quite a few problems with literature overall, but my main source of help was watching your videos and thoroughly looking at the quotations so I can use them more naturally in the exam room.

Additionally, looking at different perspectives and having a way to further explain your views will persuade the examiner to take a paper from LO4 to an LO6 in my opinion.

Also, having a clear intro to place before your thesis is a MUST, using advanced words such as archetypal, didactic etc. This will give a really good impression and possibly change your grade even if the rest of the essay is not as good.

For the conclusion I suggest telling your students to mention something that hasn't been said throughout the essay in order to try to get any last marks - possibly talk about the title of the book/novella and how it creates an effect or some background information on the author or context.

Language

For language I think the main way to improve is practicing with past papers

And focusing on some keywords and vocabulary that will make the texts look more advanced. E.g. instead of saying conveys -> powerfully conveys or masterfully conveys.

Also the time limits are quite harsh so the students will need to be able to move quickly between questions.

For the creative writing in section B, depending on each style of question, the best choice is to have a small plan which will excite and examiner and also paragraph the text correctly with good organisation.

My Thoughts

It is no surprise that Orlando managed an even higher grade in literature. He has simply applied more thinking to how to maximise his grade.

For both subjects he has tried practice answers.

He has realised that the fastest hand wins the duel – he's practised writing fast under exam conditions.

I like the simplicity of having a three part thesis that then corresponds to 3 parts of your essay, and therefore writing 3 large paragraphs. (Huge paragraphs are not helpful to the reader, but many English teachers encourage it, and this rule of 3 and 3 is really easy to remember!)

I wonder if his language grade would have been higher if he had prepared his Q5s in advance? See what you think when you have read what other students did.

@Navyrr

So crazy. I'm still in shock. I went from a 2 in my last mock to a 9. I skipped an entire 8 marker at the end of the second literature paper and still got way above the grade boundary. I'm so proud of myself and so thankful for this channel! Thank you!!

1. I focused more on revising grade 9 ideas instead of just quotes. And I didn't know many quotes. Especially trying to use your ideas that I'd never heard before in class and then coming up with my own as well as ones from grade 9 and 8 answers. Like the ideas about suppressed homosexuality in Jekyll and Hyde or the meaning of Macbeth's name and then made sure I linked it to my point.

2. For the poetry section, I didn't know all the poems that well, but picked a few that I knew very well that I liked and from liking them I knew I could write a lot about them since they were interesting.

But I think it's way more useful to know key points for every poem because thankfully the chosen poem was the one I loved, so I had points ready. I was just lucky in that case.

3. Also, the AO3 knowledge on your YouTube page is the biggest lifesaver ever!! I would recommend watching those long videos you have about contextual knowledge and writing notes, then try and remember them.

And during the end of each paragraph fit something in if you haven't already.

4. Another tip would be to watch your videos when you write example answers because in my mock I had used good ideas but I was not great at explaining them well or linking them and I used peel which just made my writing not great.

Then because I watched so many videos of you writing example answers, and read so many other example answers, I eventually I think subconsciously picked up that style of writing. It should never sound cut up.

5. And for my mock I had good ideas but not enough. Which is why I didn't write enough then.

Length of writing isn't everything but it definitely matters because you need to have enough to get a higher grade.

Looking back at my script I usually have 2-4 good main ideas that I link to other good ideas throughout my answer.

Should be able to look back at every single one of the points and go "that is such a clever point omg". Even if I used a common point I would use my AO3 knowledge to try to make it unique!

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My Thoughts

Navvyr has a great approach. ***Context is everything in literature***. It is the best way into the writer's ideas and thoughts.

Knowing Priestley was much more anti-war than anti-capitalist changes your view of An Inspector Calls.

Knowing Stevenson hated England so much that he left it forever (and moved to Samoa) and that he was an atheist, dramatically changes your understanding about Jekyll and Hyde.

Knowing Shakespeare adapted a famous poem for Romeo and Juliet, in which the two lovers are the villains, turns everything about the play on its head!

Knowing Macbeth was written to be performed in front of the nobles in King James's palace, not for the London audience at the Globe, completely changes what you think are the messages in the play.

And so on.

And you notice that Navvyr got there by writing loads. The fastest hand. You can write fast, but where do all the words come from? From ideas. And ideas come from context.

@user-kw1tn7sl8i

Your videos were SUPER useful and I told all my friends about you!

I got both 9s in English and I was super happy with my 152/160 in literature as it was my weakest subject for a long time.

I'm more of a maths student but your videos made English seem much more interesting and easy! THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

These would be my tips:

Most important tip would be to use your teacher, as they can help you improve by a huge margin.

If for some reason you can't do that then I'd say you should use ChatGPT instead (ask it to mark your answer based on a criteria, then feed it the top of the mark scheme and paste your answer)

Literature:

For all the texts choose some quotations (I did about 8 each) that apply to every question to the best of your understanding

and analyse them

(looking at a bunch of grade 9 answers can help with this-Mr Salles has videos on these!)

Make sure to memorise these especially the analysis - this method worked really well for me 32/34 on Macbeth, 29/30 on A Christmas Carol and 33/34 on An Inspector Calls

For poetry pick 3 poems that contain the biggest themes and learn them really well - I did power and conflict so I made full grade 9 answers on Bayonet Charge (War), London (Societal Issues) and Storm on the Island (Nature).

Then I made a single comparison e.g. London and MLD. Pick a quote from MLD and analyse it and this should compare with a quote from your full answer on London.

Your final answer does not need to be balanced - In my exam I wrote loads about London and a bit about MLD and I got 30/30.

For unseen Poetry you just need to practise questions and learn the basics of poems such as form (Epic, Sonnet, etc) and caesura/enjambement. By simply doing this I got 21/24 and 7/8

Language:

Paper 1 Q5- Create descriptions on 2x weather and 2x character - one good and one bad and memorise- This is Mr Salles's method and it works - I got 38/40 (23/24 and 15/16)

For the rest of paper 1 just practise questions and get them marked.

Paper 2 - just practise and you will should see progress - I didn't do this as much, hence why I did worse on paper 2 (60/80) whereas paper 1 I got (74/80)

Keep practising questions as you need to build stamina for the exams if you want top grades!

My Thoughts

I love the idea that my videos make the subject interesting, even if you are way more into other subjects.

This has really helped User to think like an entrepreneur. User has simply asked, 'what is the minimum amount I need to learn for a grade 9?'

The rest is just practice questions, and your lovely teacher who, whether they smile happily, or have a face which looks like it is sucking a lemon, really, really want you to do well. Make their day. Keep giving them your practice answers.

Incidentally, if you ask ChatGPT to improve your answer, it tends to do a terrible job. However, if you ask it to give you 5 ways the answer needs improving, it is pretty damned insightful.

@melisaakpnar1111

I was very lucky to find such a wonderful channel to help me with my English revision. I got a 9 in English language and an 8 in literature although I was 2 marks off a 9.

But I am so grateful for your immense effort in making helpful videos throughout the years. At the end it all paid off.

1. Knowing how to answer each question and making key notes on characters, themes etc... e.g. for Macbeth

2. Reading and reviewing student sample answers and trying to copy them

3. Practice writing sample essays by using and remembering my notes

My Thoughts

If I had my own class again, this is what we would do:

Read the book. Smash it out, act it out, read it out, just get through it and enjoy it. No analysis. We'd read for 20 minutes. Then I'd ask you to blurt, 3-5 minutes. Just write, as writing is thinking, and the fastest hand wins.

Or, I'd guide the blurt like this:

1. 'Write down 3 things you have learned about each character in the next 2 minutes. Go.'

2. 'Write down 3 predictions about what is going to happen next, or later in the novel. 1 minute. Go.'

3. 'Write for 1 minute. Start with 'I wonder if…'

So, you'd never forget who the characters are, or what the plot is. And you'd have a brilliant understanding of the structure because of your predictions, and finding out which were right and which were wrong.

Only once we'd read the whole thing, would I teach you the book.

I'd do that through essays.

1. Let's read the essay. Let's take out the quotes. From memory, which ones would you put back in?
2. Let's take out the most important words in a paragraph. Take the essay away. Write your own version of the paragraph with those ideas.
3. Turn each paragraph into one sentence.
4. Rewrite the essay, or part of the essay, from those one sentences.
5. Let's plan an essay which argues the opposite of this essay – let's attack the argument.
6. These, and another dozen activities, playing around with the essays.

7 essays would answer every conceivable question that comes up in the exam. Every student would have read and understood 7 grade 9 essays. We'd easily pick out the top 20 quotes that fit the majority of essays, and the top 10 ideas which fit nearly every essay. We would have a perfect thesis statement and a perfect conclusion which we could adapt to any essay.

2 weeks to read. 4 weeks on the essays. 6 weeks, compared to the 10-12 weeks it normally takes in school.

And would we know the book inside and out? I reckon so. And if any student got below a grade 7, it would be because they wanted to.

That's why the next literature guides I write will be 100% filled with essays. I think they are going to transform students' grades.

@subbhy3791

Achieved full marks on literature, partly thanks to your videos, thanks!

I’d say to watch a range of YT videos and crystallise the key info (take it all with a pinch of salt).

Ensure you have a thorough understanding of every character and theme and how they all link together.

Make essay plans on potential Q’s, do past paper Q’s and use sophisticated, high level vocabulary (metonym, equanimity, Bildungsroman, character construct etc., explode quotes on a macro and micro level and include the author’s intentions).

My Thoughts

You can find a lot more detail in his Newsletter: the lame newsletter . This is my summary of some of those points.

1. Learn the author’s purpose with each character.

2. Learn the themes.

3. Learn quotes with methods and the effects, not just the quote on its own.

4. Learn vocabulary to help you write about structure, such as Bildungsroman and parallelism, enjambment and caesura.

5. Use tentative language like perhaps, may, might

6. Learn terminology: microcosm, macrocosm, equanimity, metonym, paragon, paroxysm, allegory, social commentator, histrionic, anagnorisis, peripeteia, foreshadows, allusion, tragic hero, paradigm, embodiment

7. Use words instead of ‘shows’: illustrates, illuminates, demonstrates, fortifies, elucidates, delineates, emphasises, suggests, indicates, implies.

@underscore2708

Got me to two 9s in language and literature :)

For literature:

I wrote out full answers/bullet points for potential questions, the majority of which included Mr Salles' ideas!

I also made sheets with all the major quotes for each novel, making sure I can apply them as broadly as possible (at least 2 for each character/theme),

And then analysed each one in depth (I reread this the morning before the exam).

I did a similar thing for structure + context.

This method meant that no matter what question I got, I would have quite a lot of very strong points to back it up.

I used Mr Salles' books for the novels I studied, which is where I was able to get complex analysis from.

For memorising quotes, I personally remembered them quite easily through spaced repetition (which I really recommend looking into).

For poetry I again just practiced and read over annotations + watched videos for further analysis.

For language:

This was always my weaker subject of the two, (got a 7 in the mocks due to believing I didn't have to revise for it) but the way I achieved a 9 was actually by sitting down and reading the mark scheme. This is way more helpful than it seems.

By looking at the mark scheme, I realised what I was doing wrong in the mock in terms of structuring my answer and essentially annotated the mark scheme and wrote down what I needed to include in each answer (ie. for certain answers you need to include subject terminology and others you can leave it out but need other elements).

I believe Mr Salles has videos on how to structure your answers for top grades, so I'd recommend checking those out.

After this, I had a go at some past papers, first of which I wrote untimed, then timed (important since the exam timings are tough).

For transactional writing + the short story I just practiced with different prompts and got my answers marked by my English teacher.

Sorry this is a bit long but hope it helps!

My Thoughts

Take notes. Organise notes in logical ways. Find quotes and ideas that fit lots of essays. Then practise writing essays.

How did underscore know what good essays looked like? In my guides and on my channel. Then include your English teacher in the fun.

We are seeing a consistent pattern with all our grade 9 students so far!

Tina

Dear Mr Salles,

I don't know if you'll see this but I couldn't let myself go into sixth form without thanking you.

Every video you've filmed, every book you've written, every Substack post you've published and every email you've sent all enormously helped me in my GCSEs.

English was undoubtedly my worst subject, but also my least enjoyable. I just couldn't understand it. I could never understand how people did so well in it, yet I struggled so much whilst excelling in every other subject.

I just didn't understand what more I could do or what I was doing wrong. In my mocks I achieved sevens, yet I was relieved with that.

I read every one of your books on literature and language and subscribed to everything you had online. You were pretty much my only teacher outside of school.

You were the reason I got 9s in both literature and language, whilst also only dropping only one mark on literature paper 2.

All your content works amazingly and I just wanted you to know that all the work you put in for the exams was more helpful than you could imagine. Thank you so so much.

Best wishes,

Tina

What I Did

Literature

For my February mocks, I did get the Kindle Unlimited free trial, but this was only a short time before the exams so I couldn't get the full use out of them. I could see the amount of information in the books was at a really good level and the analysis was really deep, so paying the money for the next few months for Kindle Unlimited was definitely worth it, especially seeing how many books of yours I used.

I did Romeo and Juliet and this was the section I prepared most on and did best in, I think because of your book on it.

I started by making essay plans for each essay that could come up, using your suggestions as well.

First I made notes from each video, just to make sure I had everything you'd talked about.

Then I would use your book to pick similar quotations and place them together, also using the in-depth analysis you had, whilst adding my own from school.

For each paragraph, I also used the content section of your book. I don't remember what they were called, but you had topic sentences in your book, that were complex, so often I used this as my introduction, as well as some parts as my conclusion.

This meant that with the full body paragraphs, I soon had a full essay. I did this for every essay that could come up, using your book and videos for guidance.

For the essays I thought could most likely come up I wrote the essay out but for the other ones I just tried to write the plan out multiple times without looking until I could remember it fully.

This meant that not only did I have valuable amounts of information in my head, but also information that I knew how to expand on and structure with similar bits of information.

My other texts were prepared in the same way - I just remember how amazed I was by the complexity of the Romeo and Juliet book, therefore I could do the most work for it.

Unseen poetry was practically unprepared for in my school, so I watched every video you had on it and the five-point method really worked for me because I went up from around 50% in my mocks to either full marks or just losing one.

For me, looking at answers really helps me because I get to understand how to structure the answer and exactly what needs to go in the answer. That's why seeing you analyse poems in real time was very helpful.

Language

Question 5 Paper 1

English language I undoubtedly found hardest and I think what really saved me were the stories on your Substack and the way you looked at the answer and improved it.

I wrote 2 stories, with inspiration from your Substack, which helped me know what to include and how to structure my answer, as well as the type of language I should be using.

You had a post about a mermaid story, which really helped me, as I used the same kind of storyline but with a werewolf - it worked out perfectly because the question ended up being on animals.

I used the improvements you had for the person, so my story ended up well edited.

Both stories ended up matching the themes of each paper, so for one story I pretty much wrote it out word for word from my memory.

Question 5 Paper 2

However, for the persuasive writing, I just used language from my story as well as some of your ideas from your book which had answers to different questions.

I remember in one piece of writing the theme was the environment and you made a joke about Greta Thunberg in your Ultimate Guide to Persuasive Writing, which I ended up tweaking and using in my essay.

Reading Questions

For section 1 of Language, the most helpful was reading top-grade answers to understand the structure and everything that should be included in the answer, and then writing out an answer to a different question but by using the full-mark answer. This meant I could get into my memory exactly what to say each time.

I used the full-mark answers in your books, which were incredibly helpful.

When I properly started putting in the work and using your resources optimally, that's when it really paid off.

Best wishes,

Tina

My Thoughts

I used to write guides just for students like Tina. They teach you hundreds of things you don’t learn in class.

Some of you won’t want to learn the ‘complex’ ideas which so delighted her. Some of you might not like English.

So, for everyone else, I’ve started to write guides which are so simple, even someone who dislikes English and working hard can get a top grade.

It makes me so happy that there are still many Tinas in school, though. Thank you all.

@ronni7154

I got 9s in both English literature and English language with 155 in literature thanks to your vids �� keep up you great work

I would say that my top things for literature were:

Write practice essays: for the real exams I copied and pasted bits and pieces from my old essays into the exam and embellished them.

Also by writing so many practice exams, it gave me so much confidence writing.

I would also read many, many grade 9 essays and use that to make my work better.

Exam structure was a big thing for me and I found that timed paragraphs were helpful for me

I found that writing in blocks of time weren't nearly as helpful as time blocking paragraphs, because I would always run out of time, so by timing each paragraph it helped tremendously (e.g. 10 mins for each paragraph and watching the time in class)

Also for exam structure, I found that using PRETEZEL was helpful because it sort of became a default and made me include everything I needed.

Lastly, context was a big one for me!!! I was also told by my teachers not to have too much context but especially in literature by having detailed and precise context and then LINKING it back to the question was helpful.

It became very important to me in the poetry section of the exam where I got stuck and it was something to fall back on and overall just made my work look sophisticated.

Coming from a grade 6/7 student in all of y10 and y11, I think that having big fancy words and concepts aren't all that necessary.

Having a range of interpretations and context was more than enough for me

As-well as thesis that I had practiced and written many times before the exam

My Thoughts

This is the sort of advice we have become used to.

A few students mention PRTEZEL, but they all spell it incorrectly, even Ronni! She is the closest though. That means it is likely that only she is using it properly. Because, each letter in PRETEZEL is a different part of your paragraph.

This method comes from my good friend Mr Everything English. It stands for:

Point
Reference (usually a quote)
Technique (which means the method)
Explain the effect
Zoom in (on 1 or 2 words in the quote)
Explain the effect of this
Link (Link back to what you said in your point).

There are a few reasons I don't recommend PRTEZEL beyond grade 7. It does contain everything you need for a grade 6.

Top grade exam answers I read don't do PRTEZEL, so I was intrigued how this worked.

Do your remember the importance of linking everything to the author's ideas? Instead of linking back to the point, but linking to the author's ideas ***would*** make PRTEZEL work for top grades.

Did Ronni do that? I'm betting she did:

> “Lastly, context was a big one for me!!! I was also told by my teachers not to have too much context but especially in literature by having detailed and precise context and then LINKING it back to the question was helpful.”

As you know by now, context always gives you the author’s ideas.

So, Ronni’s form of PRTEZEL can get you grade 9.

But it takes a lot of words. It slows your writing down. I encourage students to do all of PRTE in one sentence. This is much quicker. It means you write more paragraphs. So you make more points.

And points make prizes.

@LailaAkram185

I just wanted to thank you Mr Salles! I achieved a Grade 9 in English Language and literature! I even got 91/96 in my English literature Paper 2 !!

Your guides and advice definitely helped make this possible. Even though GCSEs are over, I will stay subscribed you legend!

Ooh. I would say the top quotes to study for each character or theme for English literature as it gave me good quotes to memorise and quickly use in the exam.

I also memorised sentences/paragraphs that got me Grade 9s in my practice essays so that I could adapt and use them in my essays.

For English language I would say that the videos on how to structure your answers gave me a clear insight on how to write a structured, clear argument under time pressure.

And just doing loads of past papers.

Finally the guides were great for revising 5 minutes before the exam! Thank you so much again ☺

For literature I did a technique called blurting.

So, I would revise like 4 quotes from memory for each topic, theme or character and revise paragraphs from Grade 9 essays.

By doing this I was able to have sentences and techniques in the exam that were almost guaranteed to get me top marks.

Also, I wrote so many practice essays and asked my teacher to mark them until I got consistent grades.

I would also brainstorm ideas and hope that they got top marks!

For language timing is everything!! So, I practiced top structures from Mr Salles under time pressure

and did loads of past papers for English Language as I felt that was the best thing I could do.

Hope this helps!

My Thoughts

Apart from the practice answers, Leila is an Entrepreneur. She doesn't want a million pages of colour coded notes. She doesn't want dozens of quotes. She wants just enough high quality stuff to get the grades.

The work comes in applying it:

- How much can you blurt?
- How much you can cram into an essay?
- How many words you can write?
- How can you structure the answer to get maximum marks?

@honestcheatellinifan7277

I got a 9 in English literature where I only dropped 4 marks out of 160!! Unfortunately I only got an 8 on language.

I would take notes from Mr Salles' videos on key quotes and the meaning of those quotes, context and any other important information.

Then I would put those notes away and try to remember them by putting them in an essay or an essay plan!

I would also try to get the essays you write marked too, as long as the teacher doesn't know that your quotes, explanations and context have come from Mr Salles.

My Thoughts

There are those practice essays again, and motivating your teacher.

Not telling them where the ideas come from is interesting. It isn't plagiarism to use all my ideas in your exam, just as it isn't plagiarism to get all your ideas from your teacher in school.

Now, I get that you don't want to upset your teacher and say, 'I'm really sorry, but Mr Salles' ideas were just a bit better'. But look, I've been teaching English for 31 years. I sit the exam papers. I study top grade answers all the time.

If my ideas aren't better than most teachers' there would be something wrong wouldn't there?

I mean, how much more will your teacher know when they've also been teaching for 31 years? You'd hope it was a lot.

But it is also worth saying that your teacher might only be 28 and have a brilliant method which is better than mine. A top student would try both approaches out and see what works best for them. That's all that matters.

(But if you do, let me know, so I can improve!)

@nicopronko

Mr. Salles, thank you. Using your channel and your books I took myself from a 7 in literature and 6 in language to an 8 in literature and a 9 in language. Once again, thank you!

My top tips for language are:

Keep good track of your timings and gain an understanding of what question order for you works the best.

For example, I did the paper backwards.

Also, I would say to do loads of practice questions

And be confident before you enter the exam on how you will format your answer.

Keep your points very concise and effective to keep the examiner interested.

If doing the description like I did on language Paper 1, make sure you have great vocabulary range so you can pack your writing with loads of amazing description about weather, landscapes, objects, buildings, animals, people etc.

And do not restrict yourself to the picture - just use it as a foundation.

Language Paper 2 Question:

I used the Trailer Style: opening, Because, Because, Because, But, conclusion paragraph format technique.

For where you give an opposing point to what you are arguing for as the “but paragraph” and then shoot it down, reinforcing the strength of your argument in all of your “because” paragraphs.

Always make sure that whatever you talk about, it is of strong conviction.

For literature,

I would mainly say to have a very good bank of quotes in your mind that you can say loads about and go into the exam,

Partnered by strong and intriguing ideas of context that you can use to level up your answer

Along with effective single word analysis, making sure you cover all aspects of the text.

Remember not to be reliant on the extract too!

My Thoughts

I really like the Entrepreneur approach to tactics for each paper and question – find the top thing which will make most difference.

And then the Worker comes into play – practice essays and answers.

I've never seen this approach to the persuasive question, Q5 of paper 2:

"Trailer Style: opening, Because, Because, Because, But, conclusion."

I can see how that might work. The advantage of it is that it is super simple to remember and stick to. I can also imagine that it will lead to some interesting writing.

If you have watched my 'because, but, so' videos, you will see how this simple technique can get you top grades. (The conclusion in this example would be the 'so').

@oscar9832

I got 9s in everything and thanks to u 5 marks off full marks in literature! U got me from 7s to 9s ��

1) for lp1 q5 I literally memorized my answer like you said with various punctuation techniques.

2) for literature I attempted to write perfect essays, got feedback until I was able to write full mark essays, then I did the essays in timed conditions until I got full marks.

3) for literature I memorised a plan for what to do in case any possible theme would come up, recycling the same quotes between my plans most of the time as I would have various connotations to use depending on the question.

My Thoughts

This is very efficient. You pick the key things you need to know. So, you don’t need loads of time to gather this. Then you practise. That’s where you spend the extra time.

I love that Oscar has said, ‘what if I can get to 100%?’

And he pretty much did.

@yasirahmed6680

Sir I got my grade 9 literature scripts back, for paper 1 I scored full marks 64/64 let me know if you want them.

First know your books and plays inside out (plots, characters etc.). Do this by watching MrEverythingEnglish's summaries.

- Skip all the small talk and search up grade 9 analysis for "your book/play" by Mr Salles and make detailed notes on context and analysis.

- Memorise a few grade 9 quotes and analysis for each play/book (mostly the ones which can be adaptable to any question)

Spam essays and get them marked by your teachers

Make sure to have memorised a bank of quotes that can be used in any question

Memorise a few quotes regarding each key theme

Also master the skill of adapting your analysis to any question

Put your faith in god and you got this.

My Thoughts

Maybe I need to make some summaries! Just revising these is an entrepreneur skill.

This whole approach could be an entrepreneur approach. Notice that Yasir is only after a ‘few’ of everything – the ones which will have most impact by being relevant to most essays.

I’ve included this advice as a Worker here because I am assuming that ‘Spam’ means ‘write a load of’ essays. As always, let your teacher delight in your journey.

Give it to them to mark!

@cheeseburger2494

Thank you Mr Salles I was expecting a seven or a six but I got two 9s

I used your videos and revision guides religiously

In terms of English language, creative writing was my weak point but I made an extended metaphor describing both good and bad weather as if it was a show on stage.

When I saw the picture of a zoo in the exam, I adapted my pre-prepared passage and turned the animals themselves into the actors of this show instead of the sun and the clouds and the wind

As for paper two creative writing, I learnt that by adding cultural capital examples the quality of my writing improved

My Thoughts

Cheeseburger is my kind of student. They've bought my guides. Then they've said, there's so much here – I'm just going to pick out enough to help me. In other words, they think like an entrepreneur.

Just look at the cool thinking behind their description question to see what I mean.

It is cheaper to get all my guides on Kindle Unlimited, which I may have mentioned is £0.99 for 60 days! I suspect that's what Cheeseburger did.

@t1hunna429

Tysm Mr Salles, got 157/160 in literature and 9 9. I'm getting my scripts back and would love to send them to you.

1. Not revising a specific essay but revising every theme in detail

2. Doing practise questions and getting them marked

3. Starting literature revision before any other subject

My Thoughts

Have you been persuaded to do loads of practice essays yet?

@akira8318

Thank you, your videos were so helpful!! I went from a 4 in English literature at the start of the year to a 9 in the real thing !!!!

These are the 3 things I did which would probably help

1) I would watch your grade 9 analysis videos back to back until I could memorise each quotes' analysis + alternate interpretation and then I'd pretend to teach it to my family.

2) then I would watch your grade 9 student essay videos and I would use them to create an essay structure. I would also take ideas I liked and would use their thesis to create one of my own for each text.

3) then I would make detailed essay plans for almost every possible question and memorise them (I couldn't do this for poetry though).

My Thoughts

Yep, if you watch my videos enough, you'll get awesome grades. You don't have to read the guides. That's why I make videos.

There is an entrepreneur approach to the essays. The idea of planning every possible essay (maybe 5 minutes per plan) is so much easier than writing full essays (45 minutes per essay). In 2 hours and 15 minutes you could write 3 essays, or 27 plans!

That's a super power. (I wouldn't make plans for longer than 60 minutes at a stretch though – it's exhausting).

Teach your family? Brilliant.

@cara6688

I got a 9 in both English language and literature and couldn't have done it without your videos!!

Absolute lifesaver, without you I could've never achieved my dream grades so thank you so much!! Best English channel out there by far: would recommend 1000%

- I found making mind maps and plans for different characters and themes for questions really helpful,
- and also I did flashcards to learn key quotes,
- but most of all just watch your videos they're so helpful!!

My Thoughts

I'm a big fan of mind maps as they connect ideas together. Drawing pictures on the map will help you remember those key ideas, and the sequence in which to link them in an essay.

@InsightfulInspirations

Went from 7 to 9 in both, thank you very much!

Literature- if you're bad at analysis and good at memorisation, memorise some quotes AND top grade analysis

Language & literature- practise, practise, practise (and give to your teacher to mark it, they tend to be more than happy to do so)

Language - learn some decent vocabulary (I actually used ChatGPT to write a fancy short intro that I used in both language papers)

Language - please learn the structure of each exam and know your time limits, and most importantly, stick to them!

My Thoughts

InsightfulInspirations could be an entrepreneur. They certainly think like one with ChatGPT and quote analysis.

But, although InsightfulInspirations has narrowed down what is important, like an entrepreneur, they are taking no chances.

Practise! Make your teacher feel their job is worthwhile and act on their feedback.

@smedhanie1219

I got a 9 in literature 153/160 and a 9 in language

I prepared all the quotes and analysis for each character in the books

Then I planned essays for each character such as Sheila or Scrooge.

I also planned comparisons for the poems but I think I got lucky with My Last Duchess because I had a very detailed plan for that.

I think what helped me the most in English literature and language is practice.

I wrote loads essays from past papers and asked my teacher to mark them and that's where I got feedback from.

I have asked for my paper script to be sent back. If you would like to use it please let me know. Thank you so much for all the work you put in, I'm not sure I could have done it without you!!

My Thoughts

Planning and practice are perfect preparation.

@jo12s65

Hi sir thanks for everything, because of you I managed to get a grade 9 in literature, so thank you legend����

So, so, so much practice essays , flashcards and watching your videos

My Comments

Planning and practice are perfect preparation, part two!

Hi Mr Salles,

Thank you for all your videos and help for both English Language and Literature. Your videos alone helped me go from 117/160 in my mocks to 150/160 in my actual English Literature GCSE exam.

Moreover, my English language grade also went up from a 7 to a 9. Yet again, thank you for your help.

Kind Regards

D

My top 5 ways were:

1. Making flashcards with quotes on one side and analysis on the other
2. A thesis statement to structure the layout of the essay but also to “show off” to the examiner
3. Alternate interpretations every now and then
4. Practice papers under timed conditions
5. Borrowing ideas from exemplar essays and videos

My Thoughts

This is an Entrepreneur, who has focused on the things which are going to make most difference.

I’ve called them a worker because they are doing practice papers. But, this could easily have been in the next section.

Entrepreneur

@venusinfurs7033

You have been such great help for my GCSEs, thank you so much. I don't think I could have got the two grade 9s in literature and language without you! You are awesome.

For literature:

I have a few, although I'm sure you will already know them.

Spend a lot of revision time actually discussing/thinking about quotes rather than just memorising them, or else sometimes you'll end up with the quotes memorised but mostly surface level things to say about them! I find sometimes you can naturally learn quotes just by analysing them.

Analyse song lyrics! It can be incredibly worthwhile, especially if you're not so interested in the texts you do for GCSE, to think about the lyrics of songs you like, even casually while you listen to them, since you'll be practising the same skills you need for English literature and it'll probably make you enjoy the song more!

Don't waste time making your opening paragraph too long: it should only give an outline of the broad ideas of your argument - preferably making it easy for the examiner to already have an idea of what each of your paragraphs is about. It's not the be all and end all, so don't worry if you don't think it's great!

For Language:

In Questions 2-4 of Paper 1 and 2, just get straight in with analysis. Remember to put a conclusion onto both question 4s, but there is no need for anything else as there are no marks for anything else.

For Paper 1 Q5, a method I used was to pick the description question and immediately think of the antithesis of what the prompt is - e.g. if it's an old man think of a young man.

Or for a colourful zoo environment I thought of a cold industrial cityscape, and then plan your description as a sort of comparison between them: E.g. I started describing an old man and then had a flashback to a description of when he was young, or the zoo could become this haven inside of a giant icy cityscape.

All of a sudden, your descriptions can gain direction and a deeper meaning that is often what holds them back from top marks - and it's relatively easy!

My Thoughts

Venusinfurs is very relaxed about writing. They know that they have the speed thing down. They're a fast hand.

I love their approach, which is to ask, 'what can I do which will have multiple benefits?'

'Why would I waste time with flashcards, when I spend much more interesting time thinking about the ideas and themes related to the quotes?'

And, guess what, this will also help me learn the quotes at the same time.

The song lyrics idea is also brilliant. My daughter (also an English teacher) loves analysing Taylor Swift lyrics. It is the same skill. But, it also leads to a richer inner life. It will make both what you read more interesting, and dramatically increase your enjoyment of the songs.

Multiple benefits.

I also like their brilliant rule of thumb: describe using the antithesis. This gives you a flashback. There's your structure marks gained straight away, and the writing part is then 'easy'.

You just know that Venus is a reader. She knows how writers write. So she's able to enjoy her writing.

Violet

This isn't a business email, I just wanted to tell you that I was barely on 7s for the English mocks, and only started watching your videos the nights before my exams. I was expecting to get 6s or maybe 7s, as I don't write quickly and have always struggled with English, Language being my worst.

I was so shocked to see a 9 in Language today! (and a 7 in Literature). I switched my technique and used your tips at the last minute and really had no clue how I did on my exams.

Honestly the 9 in Language doesn't help me with my STEM A levels, but it's still pretty cool.

Thanks,

Violet

Top Tips

Mostly the things you said about writing sentences instead of paragraphs when answering questions

And trying to make as many points as possible,

As with my writing speed the narrative "quality over quantity" that my teacher applied to all of English seemed to especially disadvantage me in the reading section. **

Your method helped me to write down all of the weird and out of the box ideas that I had, without committing to writing loads about them.

I seem to remember having some sort of checklist when writing the story and trying to make the story as "different" as I comfortably could (I ended up writing an Animal Farm inspired rebellious elephant, who tramples a toddler (for good reason)). It's all so long ago now, but I wrote down the last section of my story after the exam because I thought it was funny.

I remember also having a checklist or plan for the speech, and that helping.

Here's the last bit of my story (it was only a page and a half anyway)

(Previously we know that the enclosure is only divided by a short wall and the elephant has just been reminiscing about life in the wild before captivity)

Bonk! My trance is broken by a sharp rock hitting my trunk. Reluctantly, I open my eyes to see the brutish face of a small one contort into a maniacal grin as it mocks me with shrieks. Another round of artillery to fling at my comrade, a small, grey duck. She speaks a different language to me, she comes from a different land, but we hold a certain solidarity that transcends culture. We are united in our oppression. Whimpering, she looks at me, her exotic eyes brimming with a universal sorrow. Enough. We have dealt with this for too long.*

And it felt amazing to run again.

Thanks,

Violet

My Thoughts

The Description

*This is a fantastic bit of writing. Deciding to write it from the perspective of an animal really works. Giving the animal high intelligence, and sophisticated vocabulary is also great.

But what I love best about this is a sense of fun. Violet is enjoying herself. She's playful, but she knows she is not taking a risk. It is what real writers do. She knows that, because she has read Animal Farm.

And, it does that simple thing I recommend: start each sentence with a different word.

Quantity v Quality

**Lots of teachers, perhaps most, recommend quality as being more important than quantity.

This is rarely true. Would you rather have one beautiful gold coin worth £100, or £300 in grubby one pound coins?

On the language papers, quality only applies to the question 5s. For all the reading questions (2, 3 and 4), quantity wins every time. It is not even close.

In literature essays, the same is true. The fastest hand wins the duel. The more words you write, the higher your grade. The more explanations you write, the higher your grade.

Emily

Hi Sir,

I opened my results to see 10 x grade 9s and 1 x grade 8.

My two 9s in English are both because of your videos helping me understand, plan, and stretch my mind to think more tactically about my English papers (timings, key ideas, including key words, paragraphs).

My favourite video was your video about how Mr Hyde is actually not evil, that idea is what I ultimately used as a starting point in my exam, which enabled me to write a response to the question about not agreeing that Hyde was evil.

This response, as well as my Romeo and Juliet one, allowed me to get 100% in lit paper 1 64/64!

I genuinely cannot thank you enough for posting your videos sir, you are truly helping thousands.

Thank you so much,
Emily

Me

Wow, only 125 students in England got 11 grade 9s, so you must be in the top 200 results in the country! Amazing!

Thanks for letting me know what helped you.

What were the top 5 ways you revised or approached the papers?

I'm planning a video on this, so also let me know if you would like to be named or anonymous!

Congratulations again!

Emily

Thank you! I actually did one GCSE last year so it was only 9x grade 9s and 1x grade 8 this year, but still very proud!

Top 5 ways and approach would be:

1. Making a plan before of rough themes and linking them all together with quotes, key ideas etc (as you do on your videos).

2. Ensuring that I had key "wow" words associated with each book I studied. So I had a glossary of vocabulary for each book which I learnt and embedded into my answers.

3. Also making sure I had a key thesis statement at the start of each essay to constantly refer back to and link each new idea in with. I found that this made me "waffle" less and stick to answering the question.

4. For quotes I revised by flashcards and then blurting out as many as I could remember. Also only learning quotes which had 3+ links between themes and characters.

5. Also ensuring I stuck to my timings and moved on as soon as the time ended, even if I hadn't fully completed my conclusion.

I'm fine with being named in the video! Thanks again so much and I hope you've had a great summer.

Emily

My Thoughts

Emily is a classic Entrepreneur.

Just think about it. Who has the time to get 11 grade 9s? Someone who makes time. Someone who looks for systems, who looks for the smallest work which leads to the biggest gain in marks.

So, Emily pays attention in class, and does her homework. She knows how to write. She doesn't need to write loads of practice essays.

Instead she practices the key things that are going to go in those essays.

She is pragmatic, and not a perfectionist. Notice that she takes my advice to move on as soon as the time is up. That can feel emotionally hard. But, it so makes sense. The marks at the ***beginning*** of the next question are really easy to get.

(I used to have an Emily at home - although he is called Harry - and he ‘only’ got 10 A*s and 100% in AS maths. He is pragmatic too).

Try this way of revising for your mocks and see if it works!

Shayne

Hello,

I don’t know if you remember me but I sent you a Christmas Carol exam question before the exams. I’ve always struggled with English and I’ve been in set 2 since year 7. Although I’ve asked to have been moved up I was never and reaching top grades felt out of my reach; I was predicted a 7-7 and achieved a 9-9 with 155 in literature. I am so shocked and cannot thank you enough.

Shayne

Top Tips

For literature

100% making essay plans.

The one I made for Christmas Carol was so adaptable to the question. So I would make them for main themes/characters.

All of the things you recommend about writing chronologically, inserting quotes into the sentences, writing about the author’s purpose were all key I think.

I made 5 key quotes for each poem with the format you use: analysis on one side and prompts/hints on the other.

For language

Although I didn’t write in bullet points in language (mainly out of nerves as I’d never done it before) I think getting as many ideas down with explanations is great for the analysis questions.

I planned my story for q5 which was vital as I could get writing straight away and adapt rather than planning, thus allowing me to spend more time on q1-4.

For the article I learned some key phrases. I was also lucky that it was about pollution and car travel as I read one identical in your model answers guide to persuasive writing, so I had ideas ready to use.

Basically all of the things you recommend!

I've asked to get my scripts back (out of curiosity) so I could send them over if you would want to use them, the model answer videos always helped me!

Thanks

Shayne

My Thoughts

I'm really excited about this.

As an adult, I'm all in as a Lover, Worker and Entrepreneur. But, as a student, I was a bit clueless. I revised 2-3 hours a night from April, but I had no idea how, and I had done zero revision for the whole of year 10 and 11.

But, if I were in year 11 now, I would use spaced learning, starting in September. I would end up doing fewer hours, spread over a longer period. And I would be 100% Entrepreneur – what are the systems I can apply to make me get the maximum marks for the minimum effort?

Then I could save my extra effort for the stuff I needed, but wasn't good at. Physics, or art. Or for the stuff I really enjoyed, like rugby, or language Q5s.

Manahil

Hi Mr Salles.

My name is Manahil and I sat my English Literature GCSE this year when I was in Year 10.

I cannot express how helpful your videos were to me when revising for this exam. Your videos and other resources helped me to attain a grade 8.

Again, thank you so much for producing effective content and I will continue to use your videos and resources for my upcoming English Language GCSE in 2024.

Kind Regards

Manahil

(she/her)

I forgot to add that I jumped from a grade 6 to my final grade 8.

The books I studied were Macbeth, Jekyll & Hyde and An Inspector Calls and I did Power and Conflict Poetry

The top things I used from your resources were

- the theme videos
- character specific quote videos
- showing past students essays
- the top grade analysis videos/ how to get top grades
- the context videos

- unique ideas and interpretations

In terms of what I did

- I wrote pretty much everything I learnt down and then whatever was useful to me I would write down loads of times to help me remember.
- For example with the poetry, I did as you said and picked 5 quotes I could say a lot about and explained it and linked it to context .
- Then I explored language devices and linked it to key ideas, themes and interpretations.
- Also I think by starting with the form in poetry.
- And not always starting with the extract in the books.

My Thoughts

I'd like to highlight the most important word in Manahil's revision, which is 'link'.

In literature, you link to the method, and link the method to the author's purpose and view about society.

In language you link the method to the way the author wants to persuade you in paper 2, or portray a character or event in paper 1.

Link, link, link.

I'd also like to highlight that she followed my advice - starting with the extract limits your grade unless you are a genius.

@benbrindley3672

Got in 158/160 in literature because of you

I really didn't do a huge amount:

My main method was annotating a double page for each character in my texts.

I would write down their quotes and make sure I had a strong point that suited all questions.

Your videos helped immensely too

But I didn't bother with any sort of practice essays or anything in that sense.

My Thoughts

Literature is just knowing stuff. Knowing grade 9 content is not harder than grade 5 content. It is just knowing more.

If you can already write quickly, and you already read books, and you pay attention in lessons, then why over-prepare?

If you can remember all the right stuff, you know you'll smash it out under exam conditions.

The best time to find out if this is the right approach is the mocks. If it works, keep it up. If not, consider practice essays, and borrowing from the Worker.

@lylz3030

Thank you! I got 9s in both literature and language. I found the sheer amount of ideas you gave us paired with the exam advice so helpful.

A top tip which is often overlooked is to research characters and themes to discover fresh and more in depth ideas.

Then, magpie snippets of these ideas and rewrite them into something you're more comfortable with.

Memorising a few of these concepts which I knew were high level but that I could write confidently on was really helpful for me!

My Thoughts

Lylz may have done a lot more than this, but I only asked for 3 tips. These are Lylz's top ones. They are Entrepreneur style, because everything is adapted and made their own.

Plus, Lylz would have mentioned practice essays if they had done them!

@mog6667

Mr Salles, I owe it all to you! Two 7s in February, and 9 in literature and language by June. Thank you for everything :)

For literature definitely tactical quote learning.

Don't learn all the texts back to front (only read them fully through once in class lol)

Find quotes that link to all the themes.

Include them while you write even if they don't seem relevant and you will start making perceptive and original points just by analysing and expanding upon them.

For language just wrote buckets and hoped for the best, ha-ha.

My Thoughts

I love this Mog. The fastest hands wins the duel. Look at the time efficiency of the quotes Mog chose.

Writing is thinking. Or, don't think, just write. These are two of my catch phrases in the classroom. Why? Exactly what Mog says. When you start writing, let it flow. One idea leads to another idea.

My son took this to an interesting extreme. He said, 'I'm only going to use these quotes. No matter what the question. It can't fail, because I will make it work.'

When he opened his results, he got an A. His teacher had always given him an A. But he said, 'Look dad, I smashed that exam. My method worked. There's no way I only got an A.'

How could he believe that? He had revised for 4 hours for literature. Total! I know this, because we did it together, full Entrepreneur style. We just focused on what was going to get top grades.

Of course, he paid attention in lessons. He maximised his time, because he didn't want to work at home.

He had revised smart. So, if he told me he had been way better than A grade, I knew I should back him.

So, he asked for a remark. He scored 159/160. A*.

He didn't get the grade because he loved English (he ranked it 9th, the idiot). Nor because he was a genius. It was because he was an Entrepreneur.

In maths he was a worker, a practice paper addict. He worked super hard at university for a masters in advanced engineering. He got the top mark in his year, and his tutor kept asking him to do a PHD.

No way, he said. He's gone to London to earn his fortune by not working hard, but definitely not too hard.

This guide is not just about English. It is also how you prepare for real life.

@Matthew-qr9to

Thanks sir for helping me go from a 5 to 9 in both English language and literature.

During the exam I just kept writing until the end, and I allowed myself to stop and think whenever I was stuck without worrying about the time. I think this helped a lot, especially making sure I think as clearly as possible whilst stuck.

But while writing, as I was writing I thought about the stuff I prepared and tried to regurgitate it.

I knew the timings I wanted for the exam and when I was running out of time, I adjusted my essay to fit more unique points rather deep analysis at the end of my essays.

Before every exam I had a rough idea of what I wanted to say:

To prepare for literature I watched your videos and I prepared using your essay plans

For Macbeth I just prepared your essay and was ready to manipulate it for the question.

For an Inspector calls, I learnt your essay on social responsibility and memorised some extra Mr. Birling quotes such as "like bees in a hive" to hammer down on capitalism.

For Jekyll & Hyde I learnt your essay plan and I managed to use all of it during the exam.

For poetry I had a rough idea of every poem already. I knew the message for them and 1-2 nice quotes which I had picked up in my English lessons and any poetry tests.

However I selected 1 poem which I liked the most - which was Kamikaze - and understood everything about it so I could compare it to any possible poem with any possible theme.

I also prepared 2 backup poems in case Kamikaze was the chosen poem - for me I chose Bayonet Charge and War Photographer and memorised 3 quotes from each.

I used Mr Everything English's PRTE PRTE ZE ZE structure for a total of 4 paragraphs linking each paragraph with a phrase e.g however...

For language I knew the mark scheme, I knew I just had to make as many points + explanations as there were marks.

I started each exam with Q5 (and then Q1,2,3,4 chronologically) so I could focus on finishing the 40 mark question.

The non-stop writing was important for me in this exam as I didn't actually manage to finish Q4. I just tried making as many quick points as possible as I had less than 10 minutes left for it.

I had prepared a story beforehand with a plot twist which I had stuck to since the mocks and continued to follow through on.

I also memorised a list of about 10-15 good words that could replace words like good looking/ugly, big/small, loud/quiet and any words that would match my story. The List included words like pulchritudinous, cacophony and meretricious.

My Thoughts

One key tactic for each question.

One key tactic for each exam paper and question order.

One key essay plan for every text.

Total Entrepreneur.

But the key to it working? The fastest hand.

I don’t like the last bullet point, by the way. You can get good marks for adventurous vocabulary. The examiner’s report always complains about it, because so many students use words they don’t really understand, and so they write gibberish.

But, I am also upset by it for another reason. Real writers don’t do that. They have no desire to make their writing difficult to understand. They use the best words they can to get across their meaning, not to ‘wow’.

Writing which is packed full of advanced vocabulary to impress the examiner is in fact meretricious (apparently attractive but having no real value.)

@thisismyusername281

Thank you ever so much for your help sir, you allowed me to achieve both 9's in my English. My English teacher just today informed me that on one of my papers, I received full marks (possibly a Literature one, as I scored 149/160!)

She has requested the script back so if you would like to see it, do let me know!

I see in the comments you are asking students what helped them revise; for me:

Engaging in the lessons (reading Romeo & Juliet as a character out loud for example) really, I think, was the biggest thing that allowed both me and my friend to get such good results.

Learning a small but sensible amount of quotes really paid off also, as I has 3-5 for each character in both Inspector Calls & R&J, as well as for the poems you suggested in one of your videos.

I also pre planned what I was going to write for my story - I didn't even look at the picture, just adapted the pre-planned story to include a sentence about what it's meant to be around and that's it.

Thank you again.

My Thoughts

It is human nature to look for evidence that confirms our beliefs. My biggest point of difference, as a teacher, YouTuber and school leader is to do the opposite.

I look for evidence, and from this, I develop my beliefs. Sometimes that is painful, as it is here.

Thisismy has a pretty slim set of recommendations! They don't seem to have done much revision. So, what they have done must be a super-power.

There is another super-power we haven't properly dealt with. Participation.

Time for an illustrative anecdote.

When he was in year 8, my son loved geography, because he and some classmates won a national competition which ended with them spending a week in the Lake District, having a great time and breaking his wrist.

So, when options came around, geography was one of the first on his list. However, he also had an annoying dad who said geography is just knowing lots of facts, most of which are general knowledge anyway.

He took his love of the subject (with my harsh but fair words) and a little bit of peer competition. He and his mates decided to try to get 100% in their geography GCSE by ***never*** doing a geography homework, and giving 100% focus in lessons.

Imagine a lesson in which no-one dared piss about because five members of the rugby team were 100% focused on doing well, and you didn't want to piss them off! Or, you were just carried away by their love of learning because, you know, rugby players love a laugh.

Anyway, he did score 100%. His teachers took a mark or two off his coursework, because nothing is ever perfect. The examiners said, 'we're not after perfection, we have to give top marks, but these students are only 16. Even Einstein wasn't perfect then, stop being an idiot' and they moved his mark up to 100%.

My point is, paying attention in class is 80% of a grade 9.

@rorevishion618 · 5 days ago

I went up 4 grades because of you! 8, 9 thanks for the My Last Duchess analysis.

Watch your videos and then you don't need to come up with ideas in the exam.

But for language paper 1 everyone should prepare a versatile story that can fit into any prompt before the exam-

I created a good and bad description of weather and a character with the help of ChatGPT

I also made a description of an animal and a tree.

I then combined all of these descriptions and made a basic plot for my story that could be manipulated for the prompt.

(Also I wouldn't recommend copying ChatGPT, just using it for ideas)

Then I wrote the story once using the descriptions then again with some of the story and some without until I could remember it off by heart - it only took me about 3-4 hours and I'm convinced if I hadn't done that I wouldn't have got a 9 in language because my stories have consistently been rubbish in the exam.

I also recommend starting with the 40 marker in both Paper 1 and Paper 2.

My Thoughts

4 grades!

All of this is great advice.

I particularly like the approach to ChatGPT. Students often send me examples, pretending it is their own. It never works. ChatGPT was trained on huge chunks of the American internet up to 2021.

It works by predicting the next word. Writing it. Then predicting the next. And so on. All its predictions are American. And it produces the ‘average’ of all the possible words it can be. The good stuff doesn’t influence the average enough! In other words, everything it produces is the average of what Americans have put on the internet.

However, if you get some average adult American writing from ChatGPT and adapt and improve it – well, that can be a winner.

@eva9069

Got 9s in English literature and language thanks to your channel!!! very grateful :)

1) practise writing essays and paragraphs with a controlled time limit before the exam on a few key topics that are predicted to come up

2) read up on the examiners' notes from your exam board from the previous year in order to know what they are and aren't looking for in your writing. For example, I did Eduqas and a helpful note from the examiner was to not focus too much on context as a whole paragraph but drop it in here and there, and I honestly think this is one of the things that got me the 9.

3) PLAN!!!! plan 3 "big ideas" (main body paragraphs) for every character and theme, link them to context and quotes

hope this was helpful :)

My Thoughts

Why not 10 ideas, or 8 ideas about each character and theme? Because you will only fit 3 into a thesis statement. Because you only have 45 minutes. Because 3 is enough, if you make them fit every single essay.

Notice that Eva doesn't seem to have spent months revising, which is why she has only practised essays on a 'few' key topics.

A proper Entrepreneur would spread this throughout the year, in case they needed to redraft any of the practices.

And context is king, as it leads to the author's ideas.

@krazykoala7329

9 in language, 8 in literature! So chuffed because I usually get 7s

Language

For me, the biggest misconception was that you can't revise for language, because you 100% can! My final GCSE exam was the only time I revised for an English language exam and I achieved 2 grades higher than usual, so I don't think that's a coincidence.

1. I memorised different descriptions for my creative writing (instead of an entire flexible story which I know many did) which also helped tremendously, especially since i-

2. chose to describe the picture instead of write a story.

(1 and 2 go hand in hand)

3. Also its worth deciding how you want to structure language paper 2's Q5 beforehand which I found your video super helpful for! :)

My Thoughts

Q5 is 50% of the marks!

But you only get 45 minutes, or 38% of the exam time on it.

And my bet is that you get much less than 38% of the teaching time on it.

So, it makes total sense to plan exactly what you are going to do for both papers.

@kkoshi_0687

Thank YOU SO MUCHHHHHH. Ahhhhhh, I can't believe it!

I got a 5 and 6 in my mocks for English language and literature but now in results day I got 9 in English language and in English literature thanks to you.

I EVEN GOT 64/64 in LITERTATUR PAPER 1 and 83/96 in paper 2.

Honestly, you've helped me so much and gained confidence in myself. Your work was soooo helpful and amazing.

I started revising 2 months early,

Where I would make mind-maps of each character and put down their top 5-6 quotations,

Then behind the sheet I would go on YouTube (mostly to you), and write down grade 9 analysis

And then I would blurt the day before the exam.

This for all English and has dramatically improved my grades. As well as that, your top analysis was useful. THANK YOU AGAIN. @Mr-SallesTeachesEnglish

My Thoughts

The Entrepreneur wants to minimise work, but also minimise risk.

When you start revision early, you can see the impact of your systems. If they don't work, you can look for better systems. If they don't work, you've got time to launch into practice essays.

I would do the essays anyway, but that's just me.

@GM_Harry

I was sick on the day of English language paper one really badly. I wasn’t even going to show up until I decided I might as well 15 minutes before the exam started.

I ended up getting a grade 9 (and an 8 in literature)

Revision

I cannot stress how much the revision videos helped!!!

Looking at past papers helped in every subject by far the most.

Second was consistency with revision. Even if you don't do a lot, as long as you are consistent then you are less likely to forget things (in my experience).

The third thing would be revising what I was weaker at and less of what I was good at. If revision was too easy then I wasn't revising the right topic.

Language

Specifically for English I actually found that it was more effective to plan phrases and sentences that just use generic description but really nice language and/or language devices instead of planning the opening or even the whole story/description for the 40 marker in paper 1.

I completely ditched mine (because I didn't have time to revise it being unable to get out of bed for a few days).

Literature

For literature I had a list of things I was going to write about regardless of what came up.

One of them was describing Macbeth at the start of the play as a 'paragon of virtue' (a former English supply teacher told me that an hour before the y10 mocks).

My Thoughts

Harry is using spaced learning. If you revise a little and often, you will simply remember more than leaving it to the last minute.

Then he has pulled it all together with my prediction videos. In these I show you how one plan can fit most essays.

He didn't know I was going to do that though! You can find them by searching for my 2023 predictions – the plans will also work for most of 2024. Don't just wait for my new videos in 2024.

I also love his mindset. Find your weaknesses. Work on them. Don't waste your time working on stuff you already know just so you will ***feel*** successful. Instead, choose to ***be*** successful.

@rorevishion618

I got an 8 and a 9.

My first tip is watch MR SALLES; watch several videos on analysis of quotes, essays and themes for literature, and for language start with the big question 5 and allocate enough time for it.

My main underrated tip is preparing a story which includes an animal, tree, bad/ good description of person and a bad/good description of weather.

I used ChatGPT to give me descriptions, then I fine-tuned some of those descriptions

Then implemented it into a story that could be changed to fit any prompt.

Once I had written it once, I wrote it with it in front of me, then 3 times without using past paper prompts.

Without preparing a story I would not have got a 9 in language, so I think it is good advice you should share with others.

My Thoughts

This is a really interesting hack for the description or story. I like how Rorevision has adapted ChatGPT.

I really like that they have decided a story will create a better piece of writing. You can change your mind when you are in the exam, if the story is too hard to fit to the question. The range of description will fit any description question.

@artemiscarnegie

9 in literature :)

Oo ok, so for me I would say in my introduction I did the 3 part thesis and used my best points and always linked back to those, I think that helped a lot.

In Macbeth and A Christmas Carol I received 34/34 and 30/30

I would also say use quotes that not many people know: for example I remember specifically using the one in Macbeth with 'Bellona's bridegroom', they would definitely notice you know the text more than other students.

Lastly, I would say something I've only seen myself use. I linked Christianity to so many of my points.

I revised A Christmas Carol the morning of the exam for the first time and gambled on the question being good: it was greed which I quite hated but I managed to analyse the text well enough they somehow gave me full marks (I linked the golden idol to Christianity and paganism and how it's a major sun in Abrahamic religions which I think the marker liked).

My Thoughts

I love the last two bullet points.

English teachers tend to organise the curriculum around themes: gothic, dystopian fiction, the hero's journey, other cultures, outsiders. It's nice and tidy.

But, for me, it is a bit like trying to understand a house by bringing in an interior designer to decorate each room in a different theme, or connected themes.

It is far more useful to know how to build a house. Houses are permanent. Decoration changes with fashion and whim.

So, in my book on teaching English, The Full English, I write about what makes English literature – what are the underlying principles, the house beneath the decoration.

Religion is number 1 on my list!

Here's an extract:

"**The 5 Big Ideas of Literature**

It is worth thinking through what you believe the unifying principles of English are. They are likely to be different to mine. But they will help you make much greater sense of your curriculum. I hope mine will spark some helpful ways of thinking for you.

Without these, I believe that each text we study will appear random to the students who study them, or at best be linked by theme. To use an analogy, if literature is like a house, themes are just how we decorate the rooms. Next year we could change the décor completely, just as in a themed curriculum next year we might replace each theme with one we prefer. A theme based curriculum is ephemeral and surface level, unless we have principles which underpin literature, principles which will be relevant to every theme. These 5 Big Ideas of literature are what I believe to be the underlying principles.

These 5 principles also help students understand what literature is for, other than escapism, entertainment and, of course, 'because the author wanted to make money'. All of the literature we study in schools, from the Greek myths and beyond, are a response to the cultural and social issues of the day. It makes sense to think about archetypal issues which recur, in every era. These are what I'm calling literature's 5 big ideas.

1. **Religion**. All texts deal with the idea of benevolent, ambivalent or authoritarian gods. For the most part, this is within a Christian tradition. This will also include ideas about fate and free will. We can be explicit

about this in every text we study written before 1919, though I am prepared to bet that actually it will be relevant to every novel and play and much of the poetry we study, regardless of when it was written.

Example from Macbeth:

Duncan's murder attacks the Great Chain of Being. Lady Macbeth is punished with death and hell. She has visions of this before she dies: "hell is murky". Macbeth is punished so that all his ambitions are soured, before he too is killed and condemned to hell. He regrets having sold his soul so cheaply, "and mine eternal jewel/ Given to the common enemy of man." Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are portrayed as satanic, in biblical imagery, referencing Original Sin through the "serpent" she asks him to mimic.

2. **Social hierarchies and class**. All texts are a response to this. We don't need a Marxist perspective to see this is true. It is because all texts require a series of conflicts, and these are nearly always produced by the different social status of characters. And we can also look at what a writer has included or excluded from the text because of their own social class, or the social class of their readers. I can't think of a single text where this is not true.

Example from Macbeth

Macbeth's social advancement depends on replacing previous Thanes. He became Thane of Glamis presumably as a reward for military victory, and the same is true when he became Thane of Cawdor. This suggests violence is a legitimate way for a Thane to attain social advancement. He calls Lady Macbeth "my dearest partner of greatness" because he knows she is motivated to improve their social status. Macbeth's desperation to become king is the logical conclusion of this. Because pre-Jacobean society had rigid social hierarchies, the only way for him to succeed is through killing or the death of others. The only way for Lady Macbeth to succeed is through marriage and, by extension, motivating her husband for further social advancement. So the way society is organised contributes significantly to the tragedy.

3. **The place of women in society**. This can be, but doesn't have to be, a feminist reading of texts. Because women have been denied equality for all but the most recent years of our history, every text we study can appropriately be viewed through this lens.

Even texts without women in them can be read in this way – their exclusion will say a lot about that society and help students infer the author's perspective on this – reinforcing social expectations of women, or pushing against them: **The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, for example.

Example from Macbeth

A feminist reading of Lady Macbeth might suggest that Shakespeare adheres to Jacobean expectations about a woman's social status, and punishes her for transgressing against these social expectations. Alternatively, all the female characters in the play, and especially Lady Macbeth, might be portrayed as having to seek autonomy and identity, because they are suppressed by social expectations. Shakespeare might be asking his audience to question their social expectations of women.

The witches themselves are also unsexed in the same way Lady Macbeth is. This is why Banquo observes: "You should be women,/ And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/ That you are so." The imagery of the play implies that women are damaged by society's refusal to grant them autonomy, such as men enjoy. Shakespeare might simply be reflecting his patriarchal society, or conversely portraying its negative impact in order to criticise it.

4. **The role of education**. The idea of literacy and the education of children is a surprisingly frequent theme in many texts. We might argue

that the whole of the tragedy in **Romeo and Juliet** is deliberately centred on the servant's inability to read the invitation to the Capulet ball. Education is a central theme of any Dickens novel. And where it is not a theme of the novel itself, we can see how novels change once the literacy of working-class readers and writers changed.

Example from Macbeth

Here we will need to consider how far Macbeth is a didactic text. We can cite the fact that it is performed at King James's court to the very nobles who might be considering rebellion against his rule, or plotting regicide. Punishing this transgression in the play tries to teach divine punishment of the same in life. It places the play in the tradition of the morality play, which saw the whole genre of plays as didactic, teaching Christian behaviour. Shakespeare links this moral tradition to his political instruction – he ingratiates himself with the king by celebrating his divine right to rule.

We can also see how he uses the play to educate King James, warning him of the consequences of repression. This is timely, because after the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, King James could quite easily have used this as an opportunity to execute any nobles whom he suspected of disapproving of his succession to the throne. This explains the scene in which Malcolm and Macduff discuss what it means to be a good king. Malcolm pretends to be an evil man, claiming he would "forge,/ Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,/ Destroying them for wealth."

The play is also obsessed with knowledge. Notice that the witches never tell Macbeth what he should do, they simply "see into the seeds of time" and tell him what the future is. So many of the exchanges take the form of lessons, from Banquo asking answers of the witches, to Lady Macbeth instructing her husband on how to behave, look, and plan the murder. We might argue that had Macbeth simply accepted the witches' knowledge as a lesson, rather than as a spur to action, he would have become king in a natural succession of events without requiring evil.

The exchange between lady Macduff and her son also proceeds like a lesson, until he arrives at the unexpected conclusion: “Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.” He is proved correct, as the murderers enter. However, their deaths could have been prevented, had Lady Macduff learned her lesson from the messenger who arrives to warn her. His intervention is irrelevant to the plot – it exists instead to prompt her response: “Whither should I fly?/ I have done no harm.” In other words, she refuses to learn the messenger’s lesson in time, and is killed.

Even Macbeth’s death occurs as though in a lesson: Macbeth appears to have defeated Macduff, and taunts him with the reason, “I bear a charmed life, which must not yield/ To one of woman born.” Macduff’s reply teaches Macbeth, once again, that he has misunderstood the lesson: “Despair thy charm;/ And let the angel whom thou still hast serv’d/ Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother’s womb/ Untimely ripp’d.”

The play therefore promotes knowledge, because it claims to impart certain knowledge to the audience: nobles who rebel against the kings’ rule will be punished in this life and the next.

As usual with all Shakespeare plays, Macbeth is also full of allusions to a classical education – from “Tarquin’s ravishing strides” to “Bellona’s bridegroom”, from “Hecate” to “Neptune” – because his plays are also aimed at the educated and the nobility in his audience. These imply that an education, and the allusions this allows, were necessary to understanding the performance of the play, but also by implication part of the thrill of theatre.

5. **Science and scientific advance**, which usually causes either optimism or fear. This is again a surprisingly frequent theme since the

rational thought of the Enlightenment. Most of the 19th century texts we read can be seen as a response to this, and how scientific discoveries undermine or challenge Christian beliefs. In **Jekyll and Hyde**, it is at the centre of the plot and mystery. But we might also view the supernatural in **Wuthering Heights** and **Jane Eyre** as an attack on or rejection of scientific thinking. It underpins **Frankenstein**, with the scientific experiment with electricity. The supernatural powers of vampires in **Dracula** are also limited, and follow rules like natural laws – the fear of sunlight is as much a matter of physics as it is symbolic of evil. Why else include the telling detail that Dracula has no reflection, if not to highlight the physical role of light? It is just as relevant to poems of WW1 which often deal directly with the consequence of scientific advances in weaponry and their inhumane impact.

We can also see that all these Big Ideas are all interrelated. A character's social status is often dependent on their gender, or their education. A woman's role is often determined by Christian expectations of morality, or a Christian interpretation of Original Sin. Christian tradition tries to preserve social hierarchies rather than challenge them, and so characters wishing for social advancement often come into conflict with their faith, or with society's Christian morality.

If we link the Big Ideas to every text we study, all our students will understand these unifying principles. They will understand that texts respond to the societies and eras in which they were written. They will also increasingly understand the chronology of how these Big Ideas have changed over time. And because these Big Ideas are all exactly relevant to today's texts and today's news, it allows students to understand their own society and culture and the texts these produce.

Example from Macbeth

Macbeth is a play built on the absence of scientific discovery. Macbeth's death depends on Macduff having been "from [his] mother's womb untimely ripped". This means that his mother has died in childbirth because of the lack of science available to doctors. We might argue that witchcraft fills the void of absent scientific thought. We can cite James the First's Daemonologie as an attempt to apply scientific thought to witchcraft – documenting precisely how to identify marks of witchcraft, but also how to equivocally rule out others.

We can also argue that Lady Macbeth is also undone by the lack of scientific medical advancement. Macbeth asks the doctor "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, / Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, / Raze out the written troubles of the brain / And with some sweet oblivious antidote / Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff / Which weighs upon the heart?"

The doctor's failure is a failure of medicine. The direct consequence of this is that Lady Macbeth commits suicide. We can see an interesting conflict developing here – divine judgement which results in the deaths of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth depend on a lack of scientific advancement. We can argue that the structure of the play yearns towards greater scientific progress. Or we can argue that its absence is part of God's divine plan.

@MimiroseChibah

I'm not sure if you'll see this but I wanted to say thank you so much for all of your videos! After watching your channel I got 9s in literature and language (after getting a 4 and a 6 in my December mocks!) Thank you so much!- I'll be recommending your channel to all of the year 10s I know when they sit GCSEs next year.

The main things were reading examiner reports

And annotating the answers that got really good marks,

Planning all my answers before I wrote them (which I didn't do in the mocks),

And marking my own past papers so that I was able to think like an examiner and familiarise myself with the mark scheme.

My Thoughts

MimiRose believes that understanding top grade essays will help you get top grade marks. I agree, which is why all the guides I am now writing are just that, full of essays at every grade.

@mannyaltamura2539

I got a 9 in literature 142/160 thanks to Mr Salles, thank you so, so much

My top 3 things that helped me:

1) watching your videos on analysing former top essays: that really helped me to understand what the examiners look for and how I can set and structure my essay

2) researching context made up the majority of my essays and I believe helped my grade massively

3) flash cards on a pre analysed quote so I already knew what to say in the exam

Once again thank you so much

My Thoughts

I like the idea of focusing on just 3 things. If you are only going to do these 3, how will you do each one well?

Set yourself a goal, and make a plan of how to get there.

Abdullah

Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to respond to me Mr Salles.

I have attached all the (full mark) answers onto a word document (it is the link above), and have had to write them up to avoid any concerns of malpractice. I do not need you to keep my identity anonymous.

(Also: I have included my ACC essay which scored 28)

In regards to revision, I would say that I didn't need to revise much as English came naturally to me.

However, I did watch some of your videos whilst I was studying any text or book in class (AIC,ACC etc..). They allowed me to gain insightful knowledge on the various characters and themes of the play. For example: the idea of Sybil Birling alluding to the Greek myth of the Sybils (which is used in my essay) or your explanation of the Inspector's final message.

More importantly, your guides themselves are written simple and clear, so anybody could understand. In my case, I simply read through your essays to understand the criteria and style needed to write grade 9 essays.

On the day before the exam and morning of the exam, I read your guide relating to that exam (ex: ACC) ten times over! It really helped me steal some of your ideas to use in my essays and others gave me a foundation to build points with my existing knowledge.

A great example of this is evident in my Poetry essay where the majority of the ideas were from your direct comparison of My Last Duchess and Ozymandias (in your guide).

Note: I would highly advise stressing the importance of timing in exams to your students and viewers, because it can be stressful in exam situations when you are behind on time, and it may cost them their desired grade (ultimately, timing affected my English language grade as it didn't let me give an appropriate response to question 2 or question 3 in some instances).

Tips: - Read many, many high level essays (If you read 100, your subconscious will recognise the patterns).

Use Mr Salles, or the internet, to attain unexplored knowledge (context or analysis that is not known by many students: remember you are competing against an entire nation - you need to impress the examiner)

Understand the mark scheme for each question EX: 'exploratory' means alternative interpretations.

Using high level terminology will automatically make you think at a higher level. For example: Think of the characters or themes as constructs that were built by the author to serve a purpose (multi purposes create alternative interpretations.) This adds nuance and depth (critical thinking).

OR - Use the idea of progression and change in relation to the questions to add flow in your essays (it provides structure and is easy to understand).

See if you are able to embed your own knowledge (I was able to use some philosophical quotes to support my points) (ex: 'love is what makes the wise man a fool'.)

I apologize for making this a long read, but thank you. Kind regards.

My Thoughts

Abdullah has two superpowers. One perhaps belongs to the Worker, or the Lover. He reads. Reading my guides and reading as many essays as possible will work, especially if, as Abdullah does, you keep re-reading.

His other superpower is all Entrepreneur. He asks himself, ‘what are the small things I can focus on which will make a massive difference?’

Look at the words he decides he must use, not because they are impressive vocabulary, but because they force you to think like a great literature student!

@evabundy3548

Your videos were the reason I managed to get both 9s in English literature and language (while previously being stuck on a 6)!!! I can't overstate how useful they were, thank you for your help!

1. Your videos on less popular poems for literature anthology (e.g. Tissue- Imtiaz Dharker)

2. Your prediction videos

3. Videos where you went through grade 9 answers

My Thoughts

An Entrepreneur would watch my 2023 prediction videos, even though that exam is over. Why? They would see all the previous questions which have been asked, and whether my prediction came up. About 50% do.

Then the Entrepreneur would make a new prediction – what does the pattern suggest for 2024?

But, and this is the really brilliant part, they'd watch the rest of the video where I apply everything in my essay plan for the predicted question to all the other characters and themes. In other words, to all the other essays that might come up.

And this means that, for those who pay attention, each video is at least 70% 'accurate', as they can use it to answer most of any question.

@hugoedwards12

1. Your videos on descriptive writing clicked with me instantly and in my mock I got 38/40 on language paper 1 Question 5, using a description.

2. Found quality over quantity - made sure I put down clear and thoughtful arguments with less attention to how much I was writing.

3. I used a range of punctuation in Language paper 1 Q5's! Found this to be very important. (Used brackets, colons, semi-colons, dashes)

My Thoughts

The language advice assumes you've watched my videos!

It is worth saying that point 2 is contentious. You can get grade 9 by just focusing on quality. But those students are always going to get grade 9. They are in the top 1 or 2 in any class, or the top 6 in the year group.

But my advice is for the top 50 in the year group. Why shouldn't you get grade 9 too? And why shouldn't the next 50 get grade 8?

Because they don't know how. This guide, written by students, should tell you how!

And I'd like to say at point 2 – write more! The fastest hand wins the duel.

The Videos for Grade 9

These students got grade 9. They don't tell us how they revised. But they do tell us the videos and ideas they found most useful in getting the top grade.

@jasjasjas58

CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH. I GOT A 9 IN LIT AND 3 MARKS OF A 9 IN LANG!!!

- definitely the quotes that could be used for multiple themes and characters;
- the English language walk thrus
- and looking at grade 9 answers!!
- and also the essay plans:)

My Thoughts

Jas has told you which videos to watch – all those bullet points refer to videos.

You have to decide what notes to take and how to use them!

@wasifahmed2713

I went from a 5 in literature and a 6 in language in the year 10 mocks to a 9 in literature and 8 in language thanks to your videos. Thank you so much for your help.

- Pretty much all of your videos were helpful but in particular I'd say:
- Your older, longer Power & Conflict poem videos
- The model answer videos (especially the literature essay ones)
- Your videos on 'cheating' Q5 in language

My Thoughts

Wasif is Jas’s twin!

@Hypervenomm1

Got a 9 in both thanks so much. At the end of year 10 I had 7|6 before I found your videos��Thank you so much, your teaching was both easy to understand and in depth.

1 - The YouTube shorts that you made, because of their short and snappy nature the information was easy to remember. I remember very clearly one where you talked about the childish nature of the witches

2 - The essay plan videos were extremely helpful to understand the amount of knowledge and depth you need to go into, how to structure your essay and also provided lots of context and extra detail about the texts

3 - The last minute revision tip videos were really good. You got me to plan a few essays, which was really helpful in increasing my confidence as I was able to regurgitate lots of information, and it also allowed me to plan essays which were very similar to what I wrote in the actual exam

Hope this helps and thank you for being such a good teacher��

My Thoughts

Note to self. Make more videos on how to plan. And then, how to adapt the plan to any essay.

I’ve just finished writing a guide to essay writing on A Christmas Carol and I make 1 plan fit 100% of every question which has been set since 2017. I’m so excited.

@DarcieMG14

Thanks so much sir, thanks to your videos I got a 9 in literature and one mark from a 9 in language. You've been a lifesaver

- The Macbeth Analysis +
- LOTF analysis
- and the method for the description question

My Thoughts

I think that Darcie just interpreted my top tips as top videos. Still, at least you know what to watch.

@shannon5012

I got a 9 in literature and an 8 in language mostly thanks to your videos, thank you so much!

I really liked the predicted paper videos where you'd predict a topic but then apply it to pretty much anything that could come up!

The mistakes to avoid and quote videos were also super helpful :)

My Thoughts

These were all videos I made in the 3 weeks running up to the exam. A bit high risk to wait until then!

@user-sd6pv1bk4r

I went from 6 and 7 in the mocks to 9, almost full marks. Friend of mine went from a 3 to a 7. That's 4 grades :) Mr Salles you truly are a great teacher. Enjoy your holiday!

1) your videos on how to structure a good and logical essay. This made it significantly easier to explain my point throughout the entire text.

2) your videos on how to tackle unseen poetry. Unseen is tough to tackle with the limited time frame but your method helped so much

3) the breakdown of the key points in the texts (and explaining why they were relevant), for example the long videos of Macbeth, Jekyll and Hyde and An Inspector Calls.

A lot of the context I wasn't taught as it went into greater depth which strengthened my argument

I watched those videos and they helped me a lot, and I think is why I got my grade 9.

My Thoughts

Literature is just knowing stuff. It isn’t rocket science. (I know this because my daughter’s partner is an actual rocket scientist!)

@aryakantak2380

Thank you so much for all your help Mr Salles! I got a grade 9 in English language and literature and I am so grateful for all of your videos and resources.

I found your poetry analysis, creative writing and analysis of top grade essay videos to be extremely helpful.

I particularly liked the FOSSE method and used it for both power and conflict and unseen poetry!

@cedricho166

Thank you Mr. Salles! You helped me push my English literature from a grade 6 to a grade 9!

- Your videos about character analyses in the required reading,
- your tips for structuring poetry answers
- and context in both Macbeth and Inspector Calls.

@NoahStephens25

Hello Mr Salles, I just wanted to say a huge thank you for your supportive videos to help me succeed in my English GCSE's.

I received a Grade 9 in English literature after a predicted Grade of a 6, and I received a 7 in English Language after a predicted Grade of a 6.

I'm chuffed with my results and I cannot progress without saying thank you for all of your dedicated videos, as I don't believe I would be in the same position right now without your videos. All the best in the future ��

- I definitely found the Grade 9 Analysis videos useful
- and the Top 20 Quotes for each play.
- I also loved your quick 1 hour run throughs of each play
- For literature, providing the story plot line and best quotes to use.

I will definitely recommend you to my younger sister who is taking her GCSE's in two years' time ��.

@kot.69

SIR I GOT A GRADE 9 AND IT WAS ALL DUE TO YOUR HELP !

I watched several, but the major ones I could point out would be Macbeth and A Christmas Carol ‘TOP 5 Quotes TOP 5 Themes’, and ‘11 FATAL MISTAKES of Story Writing Q5’. ��

@Joe-wu2yb

I got 9 in language and 8 in literature so thanks Mr Salles. Went from a 6 and a 7 respectively.

My actual name is Zoltan btw (I'm from Hungary but my family name sounds Spanish like yours:))

- And the most helpful videos were definitely the essay plan videos for a predicted question as I could use them for any question.
- Your top quotes also really helped along with the model student answers.

@zerogrqvity5654

Thank you Sir for alllll the help tips and tricks, I got a 9 in both English Language and literature

- Definitely your essay plans for English literature
- and English language
- exam technique, particularly the 16 marker with having to write 16-20 points

My Thoughts

In my latest guides to each question on the language papers, I read over 200 marked answers published as exemplars by AQA.

Then I wrote over 200 answers to try to understand what gets the mark at each grade.

And, for questions 2, 3 and 4 on each paper, the most important thing by far, was how many explanations you write.

It isn't what the marks scheme says. So it isn't what teachers say. I didn't used to say it, until I read and wrote those answers.

But it is definitely, beyond a shadow of a doubt what makes the biggest difference between each grade.

Here's an analogy. The average height of an American basketball player is 6 foot 6 inches. They might all have the same level of skill, but the taller they are, the more points they score.

Height makes such a difference that 17% of all the Americans in the whole country who are 7 foot tall are professional basketball players.

That's what I'm talking about. The taller you are, the better your chances.

In language and literature, the fastest hand wins. Writing speed is the equivalent of height in basketball players.

Luckily, you can write fast, no matter how short or tall you are!

@ollie3220

Thanks to your help, I was able to get a 9 in literature and a 9 in language - something me a year ago could only have dreamed of.

Your videos on literature and the deep analysis of characters and themes helped me massively, as well as buying your power and conflict poetry guide book - enabling me to take inspiration from each essay and comparison points.

Additionally I was able to use your videos to perfect my exam technique in Language to make the bridge from an 8 in my mocks to a 9 in the real thing, so I cannot thank you enough Mr Salles…

I also got my whole English class on the bandwagon and my English teacher loved your videos and showed them to the class. It would have been selfish to not share your English wizardry.

For me the three things that helped most were your grade 9 character analysis videos - especially for An Inspector Calls regarding Sheila and Mrs Birling.

Secondly, was your video guide to unseen poetry which showed me how to tackle the question and taught me what to exactly look for in the poem and what the examiners are wanting from it.

And finally, your guide to language paper one question four, as that was always my weakest question in the first paper so I knew that I had to improve on it.

My Thoughts

Look at the way Ollie thinks:

First, he finds out what he doesn’t know, where he is losing marks.

Then he goes out to correct that, learn the techniques, or the content or the structure of the question.

Does he go out and buy my guides? Sort of. He says to himself, the most efficient way to learn is going to be to read top grade answers. So, that’s the guide he bought. That’s an Entrepreneur.

Grade 8

Lover

@Jay-ll8qf

Thank you sm!! I got an 8 in my mocks in literature and 6 in language . Then in the real thing I got an 8 in literature and 7 in language! I used to get 5’s straight until I started watching your videos which also brought up a passion for plays! thank you so much.

1. watch and rewatch your grade 9 videos.

2. memorise the key and main ideas / topics. (class, gender, socialism)

3. never note taking

I consistently watched your videos , without note taking or memorising quotes as they came to me naturally with understanding the play.

The main thing I did was understand what you were saying and the play itself rather than to memorise the play.

Writing about the purpose of the authors helped massively with both language and literature, and truly there was no 3 things I did.

I found your videos to be extremely engaging and I can see that you truly enjoy your subject which helped a lot: with other online youtubers or even my own teachers I found to be boring (and fall asleep) .

Watching your grade 9 videos were amazing. With your videos I also began to create my different ideas such as the idea that the only thing that distinguishes Mrs Birling and a lower class woman is her title, and I believed her to be even more ambitious than Mr Birling but unable to attain power without her husband.

Eva 'borrowing' her name was a reminder that she is bound to this male dominated society and lead to her hostility etc.

Overall, thank you so much and watching your amazing videos with no notes was the only thing I did. They were super fun.

I recommended you to all my friends who got 9's and 8's! Well done, I couldn’t have gotten these grades without you!!!

My Thoughts

This is a lovely response from a Jay, who will remember so much of their literature once they have left school.

Jay obviously hated taking notes. And practice essays. These would have made a grade 9 much more likely.

But, Jay might say, isn’t grade 8 great? Isn’t really enjoying the subject great?

And, Jay has a point! You don’t need a grade 9.

@tacendamori

Went from a U to an 8 in language and a 2 to a 7 (few marks of an 8) in literature. For the English language I got a few marks of a 9 too.

When I was getting U's it was simply because I didn't understand the wording of the questions so I would only do question 1.

Language

I used your book to understand what the question was asking me and memorised the steps.

I also memorised a story about a pigeon that ended up fitting the prompt perfectly.

English literature

I memorised 11 essays for poetry and some other essays/paragraphs for the other topics.

I think the reason I ended up doing so well was because I have a pretty good memory and I enjoyed English a lot.

Revision

I revised hours a day for literature, not so much English language though.

One of the three tactics that helped me were reading and listening to the way you speak.

Through this I was able to mimic your choice of words and the way you explain things in my work.

Secondly, memorising quotes and exemplars.

Effort

And lastly never giving up.

It took me months to improve so much but I revised and never stopped working hard to improve myself.

Looking back I only really started trying for English language in 2023 and English literature the start of year 11, but it still payed off.

I had no class work for English paper 1 in Year 11 and none that I understood in year 10. I also had never sat the exam for English language paper 1 before the GCSEs so your videos 10000% saved me from failing English language. Thank you so much! <3

My Thoughts

How many of the grade 9 students deliberately exposed their mistakes? How many gave essays to their teachers, and asked how to improve them? It was a lot!

In English schools, students are scared of making mistakes. It is a cultural thing.

In countries like Finland and Estonia, mistakes are nothing to be scared of. Students welcome them. International tests show they learn more than English students.

Notice how Tacendamori suddenly started to succeed once they had overcome their mistake.

No practice essays though? That would have got grade 9.

Worker

@LolaBint-Savage

I just wanted to say THANK YOU SO, SO MUCH!

I got an 8 in both literature and language, after only ever getting 4s in my mocks (I struggled a lot with timing and not writing much in case I got it wrong) and I watched so many of your videos and they honestly SAVED ME .

I couldn't have done it without you, so thank you so very much!

1. For me, I would always spend a lot of time on my homework or school work which actually didn't help as I could write a really good answer (but in like 1.5 hours for a 15 marker and even sometimes only a 6 marker)

Language

But when it came to the mocks or tests, I ALWAYS ran out of time. So my teacher made me answer questions for English language but I was only allowed to spend the recommended time on it. This really helped me to write still quality answers but in a short time. Even though they wouldn't have been top quality, they were still good enough to get high marks. It helped me not spend too long agonising over how to word it and even made it come to me more naturally.

2. I found it useful looking at examiners' notes and looking at students' work and why they got top marks and why some didn't, so I could make sure I included all the right things! This was really, really useful, I think this helped me most as unfortunately, I couldn't watch all your videos for language as I did Edexel, so I found the best way to know how to answer the questions was from the examiners themselves, as different people would say different things.

3. **For English literature**, my cousin would give me a question and then I would come up with my intro (I would have a set frame but would change it depending on the question), and then three points and plan it with her, and then keep doing that with different questions, as I often found it tricky to come up with points so that helped.

4. **For literature**, I watched your videos and this is what made me improve the most as for my mocks, in November, I hadn't discovered your channel to revise from, but since I watched your videos I noticed myself improving in literature a lot- I knew what to write and what the examiners were looking for thanks to your videos!

I practised a lot of essays with the ideas in your videos, and when it came to the real thing, because I had already written essays, I found it much easier to know what to write as I could remember what I said in the practice essays- so I guess just lots of practice essays and remembering the ideas and purpose of the texts.

5. Another thing I did to improve was I would read through articles from the style magazine and pick out literature phrases that I liked to include in my writing. (This isn't a big thing but it made me feel a bit more prepared!)

My Thoughts

Look at the impact of practice essays. They helped Lola jump 4 grades.

And notice too the fear of mistakes. Once you get over that, anything is possible!

@federalbureauofinvestigati750

I went from being a student who never heard of a structural technique or a language one either to a student who got a grade 7 in literature and an 8 in language. I thank Mr Salles though.

To give you a bit of context (after all it's what you emphasise the most in your literature videos) I left the UK after year 7 and was away until the summer of 2022 in Somalia where education wasn't as fantastic.

- When I returned, I accepted that I was behind in all subjects and started to learn for each.
- For English literature, your playlists along with relevant history and religious documentaries helped.
- For language, tuition and excessive practice helped.

My Thoughts

We can only imagine that practice essays made a massive jump in grades.

Look at the maturity – FBI knew they were behind. They accepted that, and simply tried to improve.

Imagine what they will achieve in the future!

@spectrum4real208

Grade 2 to an 8

1. Looked at how grade 9 students worked and emulated how they worked

2. Understood the mark scheme and examiner reports by using your grade 9 essay videos

3. A relentless work ethic, fearing of failing

My Thoughts

There is a lot of debate about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Is it better to be motivated by internal, personal desires, or by external materialistic or social forces? By money and what people think of us?

In other words, do I feel successful by getting better at the thing, or does my success depend on my grade, how others see me, what opportunities that opens up financially or for status?

Studies tend to show that intrinsic goals make you happier in the long term.

So, I am delighted when a student works hard, always tries to know more, and develops a fast hand. What grade they end up with is not as important.

But, I totally understand why someone would be more motivated by the grade. Extrinsic motivation also works – eyes on the prize, and all that.

But you are more than the sum of your grades. In 5 years' time you'll all have a 2:1 or a first from university. And no one will care, except you. 5 years after that, you won't care either.

But, what you learned on the way, will reward you for the rest of your life.

An anecdote to show what I mean. My son got 3 A*s and an A at A level. His maths scores put him in the top 1000 or 500 A level students in the country, because he scored between 99% and 100% in maths and further maths. He studied a weird maths and physics degree at Warwick, where he had to do 55% of a maths degree and 55% of a physics degree. Then he had to take the same exams that those who did 100% of the degree took.

So, physics was a breeze, and maths became hard. 'Gifted' mathematicians from the UK and abroad abounded at Warwick. One was a 17 year old German boy who had taught himself English and didn't bother doing some of the coursework because he knew he would get 100% in the exam.

So, my son got a 2:1, because of his maths score. He didn't even go to graduation. Extrinsic motivation? He got top marks in his advanced engineering Masters so that he could leave with pride. He doesn't mention it to anyone. Turns out it was intrinsic motivation.

But what makes him happy? Not engineering. Living in London, working at a small company in recruitment, where you can measure the impact of your work straight away – either you succeed, or you don't, week by week. He has work life balance and as much culture, food and entertainment as you get anywhere in the world.

Learning how to work hard gives you greater opportunities. But you have to choose the methods of hard work which you can enjoy.

@planespotter05__45

I went from a 2 in literature to an 8. I am very happy

This is for real. I struggled so much with English. 60% of my revision was targeted at English. I'm being serious but if it wasn't for your vids I would have defo failed.

I watched every poem analysis, themes video and top grade idea video for Macbeth, An Inspector Calls, Jekyll and Hyde and power and conflict.

I also used your paragraph structure, and that gave me the freedom to include a lot of evidence and points in my paragraph.

For language I just watched videos.

Also I used to be terrible at analysing language devices. So in my own time I taught myself things like sibilance, iambic pentameter, hyperbole, etc.

I did practice paragraphs as well. This also raised my language grade to a 7.

But the reason I got such a good grade was due to your informative videos.

Thank you so much sir, and I will be sure to recommend you to the upcoming year 11's.

My Thoughts

The word I love most here? 'Freedom'.

In the world of YouTube, creators are encouraged to research their 'Avatar', the typical viewer. I know 51% of you are boys, and 49% are girls. YouTube tells me that about 60% of you are students and 40% are adults.

So, who do I make videos for, girls or boys, adults or students?

None of these. I make videos for people who want the freedom to learn and love English. But even more than that, for the people who want the freedom to succeed.

Never mind what set you are in, or what your previous grade was, or whether you like your teacher, or whether your classmates let the class learn. And never mind how rubbish the AQA exam questions are.

I'm looking for the student who still wants to succeed, to free themselves from the barriers that surround them.

Or the teacher, who wants to find a better way to teach their class and escape the questionable stuff shared on Twitter and in teacher training.

I hope this guide helps you find a way to revise that gives you amazing grades.

@henryhunter1773

Got a 5 in the mocks for English language and literature, ended up with an 8 in literature and a 6 in language.

I'm so glad to have bought your revision guides, and to have watched so many of your videos!!!

I watched so many of your videos on all the texts I studied,

Regularly testing myself on points that you made.

I tried some practice essays, sending them in to my English teacher,

And just never stopped believing in myself.

I think improving your mindset while revising is the thing that helped the most, and it's the thing I've learned most from doing my GCSEs.

My Thoughts

Yep, that's what intrinsic motivation looks like. Once the English grade is meaningless (because you will be focused on A levels, and then probably a degree – so pretty soon!) this lesson will endure.

If I believe my efforts will always lead to progress, I'll always get better.

Then my important decisions in life are simply choosing what it is I want to get better at (and who with).

@denisali8084

I went from a grade 6 to a grade 8 in my actual English literature exam mainly thanks to your videos. Thank you so much for everything Mr Salles I’m so grateful! ��

It’s been a while so I need a minute to think about this �� but I watched all sorts of your videos.

But I would say that your top 10 quotes videos for all the texts helped me a lot as I could use those and know that they are always effective.

I would also say the Macbeth, An Inspector Calls ‘everything you need to know’ type of videos were very effective

The character specific videos also helped me massively for any question that could have popped up

These are just a few examples but overall all of your content is very helpful and I would recommend your channel to any future English students Sir! ����

My Thoughts

Maybe there were no practice essays.

But Denis prepared for every question that could come up. Smart.

@exclusive___x

Thank you SO much Mr Salles! I began watching your videos when I was stuck at a 6 in literature and Language, but after taking your advice I managed to get an 8 in both at the end. I would've never imagined to get that grade because I felt like I was struggling initially.

- I felt your LOTF videos from a long time ago helped me a lot,
- in addition to your Romeo and Juliet prediction videos
- and your 'how to structure literature essays' techniques.
- For language I found MADFATHERSCROCH to be really useful
- and I also got your 100% in Language guide book.

�� I am hoping to get my Language paper remarked as I got 1 mark off a 9!

My Thoughts

My guide to 100% in English Language was the first guide I wrote, before anyone had sat the current GCSE.

It was, and still is, the best guide I have read on taking the whole exam. But is it good enough?

Well, since then, I've written guides to each individual question. To do that, I've written over 200 answers to all the questions. These have taught me quite a few things I didn't know.

The main things? The fastest hand wins the duel. Write as many explanations as you can. Each question is simpler than I thought. It is possible to be a weak reader and writer and still get grade 7.

If you are stuck on a particular question (or you are a teacher whose class do worse on one particular question) there is no other guide which gives you over 20 answers at all grades, with an explanation of how to get each grade the fastest way possible.

@x0x.sparrow.x0x72

I got two grade 8s thanks to you! ty so much. I'll make sure to let my siblings know where to look for

The videos on the quotes with links to different themes were very useful for Macbeth, A Christmas Carol and poetry.

I wrote them all down on flashcards and managed to memorize most of them for my exam.

For my English language 100% the videos with examples of grade 9 work and the structure.

For my story I did memorize a chunk of writing describing the weather and it was very useful. thank again :)

My Thoughts

Flashcards are good. But, I prefer studying straight from grade 9 answers, so you can learn how those quotes are applied.

And if only Sparrow had done some practice literature essays, would they have got grade 9?

@ilikehotdogs7786

At the beginning of Year 10, I ended up with 5 in English Language and a 6/7 Literature. I got two 8's in Lang and Lit, couldn't be happier! Thanks for all your help :) (gonna stay subscribed tho ofc :D)

Honestly, just doing simple mind maps and essay plans, just trying to jot down all my ideas as fast as I could.

Then, I would go and watch your videos on either Macbeth/AIC to see what I could've added.

For me, I had always struggled with working in pressured conditions, so this really helped!

For language, it was just practice, practice, PRACTICE!

I loved your videos when you went through a past paper and showed how to plan/answer it - super helpful!

My Thoughts

I love a mind map. Part of me thinks I should make some to use in videos or even to sell or, when I get a website, give away for free.

They have 2 qualities which I treasure.

1) They show how ideas link, which is just so efficient and top grade!

2) They are colour coded with pictures, and only contain crucial information, so they are super easy to remember.

But now I have a third: most students don't do practice essays because it is hard work, and also leads to a psychologically hard grading. A mind map takes all that pressure away. It is therefore psychologically easier to learn, as your mind is in a 'flow' state, rather than 'fight or flight'.

@AyoOgunyoye

2 marks off a 9 in literature

- I'd say what helped me the most was just re-reading the texts numerous times as it reminded me of the themes, character depth and development, and how the writer chose to express this.
- I also think it's a great way of finding the quotations that work for you.

My Thoughts

No practice essays!

@ameliairisjune2846

I got 8s in both, and 1 off a 9 in literature (sort of annoying but never mind haha) Very pleased with my results :) Thank you sir!

In literature

- I made a list of all the themes/characters that might come up
- and wrote down 3 points and quotes for each
- so I had an essay roughly planned for any possible question.
- I used Quizlet to memorise the quotes.

In language

- I just did loads of practise questions and asked my teacher to mark them until I got better.

My Thoughts

Some practice essays at last, but only for language.

@rhproductions603

I got a 6 in mocks and then I ended up getting an 8 in literature thanks to you :) THANK YOU

- I mostly just watched loads of videos to gain lots of different ideas that I could then relate to any question

- and then did past papers using these ideas to practise.

My Thoughts

I like the simplicity of using my videos to do practice essays. It makes revision easy.

Have you noticed how the grade 9 students think about their revision in much more detail? How they try to work out one thing per question which is going to make a massive difference?

I get the impression that grade 8 is hard, but not that hard. It doesn't seem to require a huge effort. Let's see if that is true of the rest.

Entrepreneur

@yinyelya

In my mocks I kept getting 5s which made me panic.

I found some of your videos last minute during exam season and I got two grade 8s! Thank you Mr Salles :)

I think it was mostly luck for me ha-ha, but I do have a couple things I could say as advice:

1. I would say that when it comes to literature, it's quality > quantity (detailed analysis on a couple quotes is better than vague analysis on plenty of quotes).

2. It's useful to give 2 different interpretations of a quotation (look at the quote from different points of view)

3. Using multiple quotes from throughout the text to prove a point, rather than using one quote/ one part of the text (if you don't have enough evidence for your point, then choose a different point to make)

4. I think knowing different poem types and sentence structures can help a lot with unseen poetry. It puts you at an advantage to recognise that before you even start analysing the poem itself. If you can't think of detailed analysis on the spot, it's like a safety net (e.g. a poem about a well-built structure/building that uses iambic pentameter throughout)

5. Also don't feel pressured to write lots, a lot of my friends used up more pages than I did but I still got 8s in the end. That's all I have unfortunately!

My Thoughts

Points 2 and 3 are sooo important.

But, I need to qualify point one. Yes, loads of vague analysis is not quality. But loads of great analysis is! How do you do loads?

You write in PEE sentences, where your point, evidence and explanation is in one sentence.

‘Macbeth’s hamartia may well be his love for his wife, whose opinion matters so much to him that the taunt that she will only see him as “the man” if he fulfils his “promise” to kill Duncan’ finally persuades him to give up the “jewel” of his soul for the respect of Lady Macbeth. **(54 words)**

See what I mean? Now I can write about the author’s purpose, where the top marks are waiting.

‘Shakespeare portrays the relationship this way to agree with the sexist beliefs of the day that women, like Eve, are the root of temptation. It makes Macbeth a more complex and sympathetic character, so that we care about his tragedy, despite knowing it is a just punishment for his sin of attacking the Great Chain of Being.’ **(57 words)**

So, I’ve included two of Shakespeare’s purposes. Two relevant bits of context. 3 quotes. 111 words.

If I only did 4 of these, from beginning, ending, extract and middle of the play, I would only write 444 words. It would be impossible to get less than a grade 7. I could get a grade 8.

But, with a fast hand, I know I can write 1000 words. I could write 9 of these. That’s going to give me more than 100%! 500 words like these would make the grade 8 inevitable…

So, PEE sentences give you quantity. And they probably increase your quality by 50%, because you can simply explain many more points.

Points make prizes.

@jbrewster7440

Went from being stuck on a 6 to 8 on results day thank you������

I would say:

- The language I used ("this is exemplified when.."/"it could be that"/ "the construction the character of ---"). This helped me intertwine ideas effortlessly as well as comment on characters as a construction/representation of an idea;
- You also helped me plan my ideas in advance despite the question which was the most helpful as I didn’t have to spend much time thinking;
- In poetry (which was my weakest point), immediately talking about form and structure was a gamechanger as well, Usually I write so much about language and forget to incorporate other aspects.

My Thoughts

Jbrewster has picked some powerful techniques. I hope you are feeling that getting grade 8 is not crazily out of reach.

But, imagine if revision had included loads of practice essays!

@user-wx2td2im7m

For me, your grade 9 videos were amazing. In so much of my essays my brain naturally thought of what was in those grade 9 responses and it also helped me structure my writing.

Those videos were also great because you can link themes easily and that's what those videos proved.

I wish my teacher showed us what brilliant responses were but you did and that's how I managed to have

1) alternative ideas

2) a clinching thesis

3) Shakespeare's purpose!

I always remembered those 3 tips and I secured an 8 in literature!!

My Thoughts

You know I would now teach each book through 7 top grade essays, covering every possible question.

To make these easier to understand, I would also provide essays on the same title, which scored lower. So, a grade 6/7 answer next to a grade 9 answer.

Imagine if User's teacher had done this. How many of the class would have gained grade 8 and 9?

Even if User's teacher thought my approach was crazy, but simply gave all those essays to every student in the class, to revise from, how many would have gained grade 8 and 9?

Or, you know, tragedy, a 7?!

That’s why all the guides I am writing at the minute are full of over 20 essays at every grade, so any student can see exactly how to get the grade they want.

@pastaandmashedpotatoes7494

Thank you so much :) My English literature grade was only 3 marks away from a 9 (I was expecting a grade 7)

Definitely your Macbeth, An Inspector Calls and Jekyll and Hyde vids going through higher grade responses.

My Thoughts

See what I mean? Learning from essays is the quickest way to succeed.

@msghypez9683

Thank you so much Mr Salles I went from a grade 5 to a grade 8

- Definitely using PEE sentences rather than PEE paragraphs when making one point per mark.
- Also not spending 15 minutes reading but immediately going onto the questions.
- Lastly, skipping Q1 on both papers and doing Q3 before Q2 on paper 2 because I've already read the extract from Q3

My Thoughts

I love this. Msghypez realises that they have nothing to lose.

So, they look at my advice which sounds risky, and they do it anyway.

- What, he's telling me I don't have to use the complicated paragraph structure that my teacher tells me I have to use?
- Wait, what, he's telling me to ignore what the examiners say, to spend 15 minutes reading?

- Are you kidding? They put the questions in that order for a reason, my man.

Instead, Msghypez has said, hmm, Mr Salles has been teaching for 31 years, his viewers say they get amazing grades, I feel I'm learning loads from his videos that I am not being taught in school – is it really a risk?

Now, instead of this, there is an easier solution. Try it during your revision. Give it to your teacher to mark. Then you will know if my advice worked.

@laxmansivakumar2406

Hello Mr Salles, I just wanted to thank you a lot for your work.

At the start of the year I was on a grade 4 in English Literature and a 3 in Language. In my GCSEs I got 6 grade 8s with English Lit being one of them and 2 7s with English Language being 1 of them and 3 grade 9s

For English Language I mainly focused on the creative writing as its worth 40 marks. I mainly got ChatGPT to generate grade 9 descriptions of snow, forests, the sun and mountains and other nature scenes.

I did this because for the description they quite often use nature scenes.

I also memorized grade 9 descriptions of air in the inside and on the outside because you can describe that in every picture and also use it in a story.

I also learnt descriptions for people. For Questions 1-4, I followed Mr Everything English's PRTEZEL approach u should defo check it out.

I did find Mr Salles more helpful for literature but for language Mr Everything English is better.

Memorising majority of my creative writing was a gamechanger for me because it enabled me to finish it in half the time required in the actual exam and the rest of the time I focused on Q1 -4

My Thoughts

This is very interesting. Laxman hasn’t mentioned practice essays, and practice exam papers. I wonder if that would have particularly improved the language grade?

You know my thoughts about PRTEZEL. I only watched a video applying it to literature. I can see that the L does not have to link to the author in the language exam.

However, points make prizes. I've written over 200 exam answers to the language papers, and read over 200 marked responses.

The prizes really are awarded for the number of explanations. PRTEZEL has only two Es, two explanations. So, it is a slower way to gain marks, because it takes more words to get through the number of explanations.

This, however, is a perfect example of what I mean by finding a teacher whose style or personality you 'vibe' with.

Perhaps if Laxman had followed my advice for language he wouldn't have believed in it, and would therefore written less, and therefore scored a grade 6.

So, even if I am right, and my advice is better, it ain't no good to you if it can't convince you. And sometimes it won't.

Even if you get a lower mark in language than literature!

Memorising key descriptions to use in the exam, if you need them, is a great Entrepreneur strategy. ChatGPT is actually not brilliant at this – grade 7 seems about right. You can use them as a starting point, and redraft to make them grade 9. After all, if you memorise them, why not make them as brilliant as possible.

Lax, man!

Also, description is 40 marks, 50% of those available. Never spend less than 30 minutes on it!

Esther Akande

Esther got grade 8, but sent me an essay on Macbeth which scored 34/34!

Hi, I made a comment on YouTube I hope this is useful I used to get grade 6s and sometimes 7s in literature and ended up with an 8. I got like 23 marks in my last Macbeth mock which was the 2022 question. I struggle with spelling as well ��

My Top Tips are:

Structure your essay from chronological order so from the beginning to the end.

Learn quotation banks for each character even if it’s 5 quotes that have full analysis on a character.

I never gave work for my teacher to mark so that probably was my mistake I recommend gaining the courage to ask you teacher to mark your independent work. Maybe I would have got a 9

Look at grade 9 essay plans which can be found on Knowunity, Mr Salles and Mr Everything English.

I only started focusing on English literature a week before my exams which is a big mistake: avoid this at all cost.

Start making revision materials as you go through mocks.

Learn grade 9 context.

Always ask your teacher for feedback.

My Thoughts

This is so helpful Esther, thanks.

I also love the way you realise what strategies would have got you the 9. I completely agree with you.

You should definitely give practice questions to your teachers at A level. My daughter (who also has rogue spelling) scored 99% in her psychology A level with that method.

Good luck,

Mr Salles

Yeah, I feel like for all my subjects I got an 8 in I could have got a 9 if I just put more effort into getting my work marked and getting feedback.

Thanks for the advice for A level. I will be doing that from now on and well done to your daughter!

Esther

Grade 7

Lover

Of all the students who contacted me, none appeared to love English if they got a grade 7. This is very good news. It confirms my beliefs.

If you love English, it is really difficult not to get grade 8 and 9.

If you don't love English, there are some simple things you can do to get grade 7, because the English content of the exam is not that hard.

It's pretty much the fastest hand.

Here's another interesting thing: none of the students who wrote to me about getting grade 6 or 7 mentioned my guides. My guides were only read by students getting grades 8 and 9.

That's interesting.

Worker

@reubensimpson-silo4774

Hello Mr Salles, I managed to get a 7 (A) in lit in the exams, two grades higher than I got in the mocks (5) thanks to you and your amazing Macbeth, Inspector Calls and a Christmas Carol videos!

I used them to create sheets of paper for specific topic quotes, for example kingship in Macbeth, and memorised them from your videos of those topics.

I then wrote on those sheets on how they linked to other topics.

I also highlighted and annotated parts of quotes from the texts and annotated them as well.

In addition, I made flash cards with key quotes from each character using your videos and also using First Rate Tutor's grade 9 character question videos to help boost my knowledge.

As well as this, I memorised my notes from your videos and asked my parents to tell me specific theme/ character quotes and to explain them.

Any I got wrong, I highlighted and memorised more than the ones I knew.

Also, to answer some questions during the exams, I used some of your answers to help back up my ideas.

My Thoughts

I'm pretty proud of Reuben. He has a system. He looks for areas of weakness. He gets his parents involved. He is always going to improve.

But, it is interesting to read this after you have read what grade 9 students did to memorise their quotes, isn't it?

They worked less hard on quotes, and much harder on learning how to apply them.

Overall, they probably didn’t do much more work! (Apart from – you know it – practice essays).

@eggmaster1233

You and Mr Everything English were lifesavers!

Was on track to hit a 3/4 up to March, when I started putting in the work and in 2 months I managed to work my way up to a 7 in both literature and language. (I was 1 mark away from a grade 8 in language. but oh well, ha ha)

Thanks for everything :D

1) PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. There is no point having the knowledge if you cannot put it on paper in properly or on time.

Get practice papers done and get your teacher to mark them (especially near the exam) to see where you can improve - it will also improve your timings a lot!

2) For Paper 2 Question 5, plan a story and test it against 30 random topics you find on Google.

If you manage to reform the story quickly and in a way that makes sense (using pre-planned big words), you are set.

So many people flopped this year with the extremely weird Q5 because their story was so extremely narrow/niche with its theme.

3) For quotations, pick only 10 per book that cover all the themes at least 2/3 times.

The quotations are better when they are small and easy to learn. This is so when you get into the exam, you can first quickly read all the questions in the paper and note down the relevant quotes right at the start of the exam.

My Thoughts

Eggmaster is such a boy! I've been careful not to attach gender to responses in this guide unless they have an obvious male or female name.

But there are so many boys like this in school, where classes are a bit of a laugh, homework is a pain in the arse, and school is sort of pointless apart from seeing your mates. 'When will I need all this 'insert whichever subject is crap' in future life?' Right?

Then exams loom, and they think, 'hang on, I might need some better grades. I'm not an idiot.' Their mates go one of two ways:

1. I'll cram the night before, and maybe in the week before, or

2. I wonder what I can do if I really apply myself. Grade 3 and 4? Forget that. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Game on.

Egg chose 'master' as a second name for reason!

Imagine if they has started year 11 with this attitude?

@reload2832

8 in language and 7 in literature. You saved literature.

I realised very late into year 11 that literature was not about "ha ha I know this quote" but more about the actual essay structure.

The top grade essay analysis videos helped me to recognise this. It went from the whole thing being a language analysis to being much more focussed on how everything works together to push the writer's points of view.

Once realising this, I made essay plans for every major type of theme in the texts and then applied them to different past questions.

Once I realised the overlap between each of the plans, it allowed to me have a fluid way to connect my complex ideas to the actual question (which was a problem for me in the past).

I also made sure that the essay plans had more in them than I could actually write in exam conditions.

Writing speed played an important part as well. I went up by a whole page and a half in each essay at the same quality by practising speed.

My Thoughts

I really love this and I hate this.

I read through the advice and was thinking, damn, this sounds like a grade 8 approach to me. No way Reload would end up with a grade 7. This needs a remark…

And then I went back to reread it. Ah, Reload did get a grade 8! But no, that was in language.

I would 100% have asked for a remark. You remember the story of my son.

@johnggow8845

I got a grade 7 in literature thought I'd get a 5 or 6, but nope. Thanks for your help Mr Salles if you see this. Got 3s and 4s in my mocks

For me watching your videos

And trying to implement bit by bit improvements into my essays

And then giving it to my teacher for feedback which lead to subtle improvement over time that got me a grade 7.

I think with more consistency and more revision I could have gotten a grade 8/9, so it definitely worked for me.

My Thoughts

Exactly John! Practice essays nail the grades. The more you do, the higher your grade. Simple.

@mexermoes5772

First time I got two good English grades: a 6 and a 7

- I would say doing many past questions
- planning techniques for every question
- and learning how to analyse quotes and texts

My Thoughts

If you just had to pick 3 top tips, these would also fit grade 8.

My guess is that Mexe:

1. Probably didn't ask their teacher to mark the practice questions.
2. Didn't memorise descriptions for Paper 1 question 5.
3. Didn't memorise the analysis of quotes and context as paragraphs which they could slip into any essay.

4. Didn’t learn thesis statements for the literature texts.

@jonnymallett4391

Thank you so much for helping with your videos. Despite mainly using Mr Everything English's videos, I think yours still helped me quite a bit.

Without them I would've likely got 6s, but yesterday I found that I got 7s in both language and literature. I even (barely) got a 9 on literature paper 1, so thank you.

I'd say: your videos on the top 5 quotes for each poem,

The idea of using examples and anecdotes for language p2 q5,

And I think just the motivation that you've been giving us just to help boost confidence.

My Thoughts

Mr Everything English and I both believe that students just need to find the teacher they feel comfortable learning from. This is why we don't feel we are competing against each other.

If you work hard, you get the grade, whichever YouTuber you watch.

I would say that there is an important difference in our approach. I'm obsessed with top grades ***for most students*** regardless of what grade they are on now.

Persuading 'average' students they can get top grades is difficult. That's why I'm getting you to read what top grade students do – it is really different to what other students do. It is what they do which makes the difference, not their IQ!

Mr Everything English specialises in methods which will boost the grade of most students. He knows most students in the country are going to get grades 4, 5, 6 and some will get grade 7. So, he is brilliant at showing them how.

He is also a brilliant businessman, and I believe will soon be a millionaire. He inspires me.

But, if you want to get a grade 7-9, you will find everything you need on my channel and in my guides.

@franciso-y3241

Went from 4 to 6 in language and 3 to 7 in literature. Thanks so much Mr Salles for helping me fulfil.

1. Revising with my friends. It just felt so great to share one's ideas and receive responses from the other person, so you'll both succeed.

2. Motivation in my 6th form the requirements to take A level subjects involved a good grade in English, so I gave myself an hour or 2 revision time and also attending after school support.

3. Reading outstanding books and finding Internet resources. Harry Potter and Quizlet were very helpful for each subject.

My Thoughts

Francisco! Such a boy. You just know he could have started his revision earlier and smashed the exam.

He’ll probably do that at A level.

Entrepreneur

@tommccoy1950

I got a 7 in English Language and a 7 in English literature! My target for both set by my school was a 4! Thankyou Mr Salles, I'm now preparing to do A-Level English Language and literature!

1. Make a revision schedule and stick to it.

2. If possible, use films as they help revise plots and characters.

3. In English Language, always look for colour and its connotations, there's always something!

My Thoughts

Tom makes me laugh. 2 and 3 would not fly in my classroom. But, hard work always wins. Point 1 – just turn up and revise. That’s why he improved so much.

And you know what else I am going to say? Yep, such a boy.

@popstarchrisgriffin2578

Used you for literature (different exam board for Language). Went from a 4 to a 7 in 2 or 3 weeks. Thank you.

I followed your essay plans for the Christmas Carol and Inspector Calls essay and just followed your advice in general. Mr Everything also helped a bit with the PRTZEL method.

My Thoughts

I am a boy! I know about the temptation to leave everything to the last minute. That's why I make those last minute videos.

You genuinely can watch one of these from 2023 to prepare for 2024, as they show you how to apply what you learn to any question. I'm very proud of them for that reason. This stuff works!

But, now that I am a man, I'd much rather you started revision early and went from a grade 5 to an 8 or a 9!

This is also another student using PRTEZEL, but not remembering it properly. This seems to be what usually happens with this method.

@rebeldragon134

Just wanted to thank you, I went from having threes in both English literature and language to getting a 6 and a 7, couldn't have done it without your videos!

I used your videos mostly for working on my analysis of the different texts and especially the context as before I watched your videos, I didn't have any context at all.

Secondly, your top 10 quote videos for Macbeth, An Inspector Calls, and A Christmas Carol really helped me focus on the right things as I was pretty much clueless with what quotes I should be revising. These also helped a lot with my analysis.

Thirdly I worked a lot on how I structured my responses, as this was something my teacher at school would point out a lot in both literature and language.

My school uses peel and petal for structure, but in my exams I used PRETZEL which was something I picked up from Mr Everything English's channel.

I'm not sure if these count as tips, but there ya go! Once again, thank you so much!

My Thoughts

Well, you know by now that I think PRTEZEL limits you to a grade 7. Hopefully, you remember how changing the Link to the author's purpose will get you a higher grade.

And you remember that PEE sentences help you get PRTEZEL written much more quickly than in a chunky paragraph.

I'm betting Rebeldragon did not have the fastest hand, or they would have got higher grades in both language and literature.

@shafinbepary2000

From a 5 in mocks to a 7 in the real thing, fantastic effort sir! Thank you so much

I’d say top 4 things were :

Mr Salles

Mr Everything English

First rate tutors

A mix of ChatGPT for my q5s but had to modify in my way so could remember the specific descriptions for Paper 1

My Thoughts

I can live with that, those are my YouTube friends!

But, what if Shafinbepary had applied all that knowledge in practice essays?

Grade 9 Top Techniques

I read through all the responses and put them into a table. That was a week ago, the 14th of September. Students keep writing in though, and I've added them to the guide, but I haven't added the extras into the table.

The tables record each time the student mentioned a particular technique. This will give us a good guide – the most mentioned techniques are very likely to be the most effective.

You can guess what L, W and E stand for!

Grade	9L	9W	9E	Total 9	8	7	Total
Reading the **mark scheme and examiner report**	1	1	3	**5**	**2**	**0**	**7**
Practice Answers	6	21	2	**29**	**8**	**3**	**40**
Read top grade answers	2	11	6	**19**	**7**	**0**	**26**
Teacher Marking	3	11	0	**14**	**2**	**2**	**18**
Memorise Essays	1	3	1	**5**	**1**	**0**	**6**
Memorise **Essay Plans**	0	6	2	**8**	**4**	**3**	**15**
Chronological Essay structure	0	0	3	**3**	**1**	**0**	**4**

ChatGPT to mark	0	1	0	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**
ChatGPT to write	0	1	2	**3**	**1**	**1**	**5**
Thesis Statement for Each Text	2	5	2	**9**	**2**	**0**	**11**
Learn **alternative interpretations** of quotes (including flash cards)	8	23	12	**43**	**4**	**2**	**49**
Limit Quotes to high value	0	2	2	**4**	**1**	**3**	**8**
Learn **Context** for writer's purpose	7	23	12	**42**	**4**	**3**	**49**
Minimum quotes Maximum impact	0	11	4	**15**	**0**	**0**	**15**
Specific **words** to use in answers	2	4	4	**10**	**2**	**0**	**12**
Mind Maps	3	1	1	**5**	**1**	**1**	**7**
Reread the texts	2	0	0	**2**	**1**	**0**	**3**
Read lots of	2	0	0	**2**	**0**	**1**	**3**

books							
Blurting	1	1	2	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**
FOMME for poetry	1	1	1	**3**	**1**	**0**	**4**
Revise only **key poems**	0	2	2	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**
Pre-plan Q5	1	1	7	**9**	**2**	**2**	**13**
Pre-write Q5	2	4	6	**12**	**2**	**1**	**15**
Story	2	1	4	**7**	**0**	**1**	**8**
Description	0	1	2	**3**	**0**	**1**	**4**
Don't just describe the picture, **spring board**	0	1	0	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**
Fastest Hand	3	3	6	**12**	**2**	**1**	**15**
Q5 Paper 2 **Cultural Capital**	2	11	1	**14**	**0**	**0**	**14**
MAD FATHERS CROCH	0	0	0	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**
Plan a **question order (usually starting with Q5)**	1	2	3	**6**	**1**	**0**	**7**
Enjoy being **creative**	5	0	1	**6**	**0**	**0**	**6**
Q2-4 as **Points**	2	2	3	**7**	**1**	**0**	**8**

Make Prizes							
PRTEZEL	0	1	1	**2**	**1**	**1**	**4**
Have a different **paragraph method**	1	1	0	**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**

Just Grade 9

Grade 9	**Total**
Learn **alternative interpretations** of quotes (including flash cards)	**43**
Learn **Context** for writer's purpose	**42**
Practice Answers	**29**
Read top grade answers	**19**
Minimum quotes: Maximum impact	**15**
Teacher Marking	**14**
Q5 Paper 2 **Cultural Capital**	**14**
Pre-write Q5	**12**
Fastest Hand	**12**
Specific **words** to use in answers	**10**
Thesis Statement for Each Text	**9**
Pre-plan Q5	**9**

Memorise **Essay Plans**	**8**
Story	**7**
Q2-4 as **Points Make Prizes**	**7**
Plan a **question order (usually starting with Q5)**	**6**
Enjoy being **creative**	**6**
Memorise Essays	**5**
Reading the **mark scheme and examiner report**	**5**
Mind Maps	**5**

My Thoughts

Intentional Thinking

I asked each viewer to give me their top tips in how they prepared for the exam. Sometimes I asked for 5, at other times 3, and sometimes as many as they wanted to share.

What do you notice about grade 9 students?

They had a lot to say. We can't say that they worked harder than grade 8 students, but they did think much more intentionally, and in much more detail, about how to spend their revision time.

And they were simply worlds ahead of grade 7 students in thinking about just how to spend their time.

(It is worth saying that students might have been doing all kinds of things they didn't mention – but because I asked them for their ***top*** methods, these are the ones they thought had most impact in getting them the grade.)

Literature

Stand out features of how they chose to spend their time was in essay preparation. They wrote lots of answers. They got their teachers to mark these. This is my number one tactic, as it brings everything you've learned together, as you learn to apply it in ways which get top marks.

They were tactical about what quotes to use, and tended to link these to alternative interpretations, context and the writer's purpose. (If a student said they bought my guides, or watched a load of my videos, I simply assumed they were doing this, as my content is full of it).

They were therefore likely to focus on key quotes, rather than volume of quotes.

Their most valuable resource was student answers, whether from school, or in my videos, or my guides. They read top grade answers and saw how the mark scheme is applied.

They were also likely to write and memorise thesis statements to all the essays, and they would tend to write essay plans in their revision, when not writing full essays.

They realised that some words force the examiner to give you higher marks, so they memorised and practised these.

Language

For question 5, they were more likely to choose the story than the description. They were also quite likely to have pre-planned or pre-written the story , or parts of it.

For paper 2, they read widely and thought about general knowledge and cultural capital they could include in their persuasive writing.

Although I only recently made videos on the importance of 'points make prizes', they were much more likely to use this approach than longer paragraphs structures commonly taught in school (Or even PRTEZEL!)

Exam Tactics

They would experiment with the question order of the language exam, and often start with question 5.

They tended to realise that many of the marks are simply about writing speed, so practised question timings and writing more quickly.

Only the grade 9 students spoke about taking pleasure in being creative, and treating the exam as a positive experience.

Does it Take Intelligence?

Go back through the list of what grade 9 students do. Only one of them needs you to be clever. And out of the 50+ students, only 6 students mentioned it: ‘Enjoy being creative’.

Everything else is just work. Any student can do it.

No student doing it would get less than a grade 7. Most would get grade 8. And a large number would get grade 9.

Grade 8 Top Techniques

Grade	**8**
Practice Answers	**8**
Read top grade answers	**7**
Memorise **Essay Plans**	**4**
Learn **alternative interpretations** of quotes (including flash cards)	**4**
Learn **Context** for writer's purpose	**4**
Reading the **mark scheme and examiner report**	**2**
Teacher Marking	**2**
Thesis Statement for Each Text	**2**
Specific **words** to use in answers	**2**
Pre-plan Q5	**2**
Pre-write Q5	**2**
Fastest Hand	**2**

My Thoughts

A few more things would be bound to make the list if I had a larger sample of students at grade 8. But, from the ones I did receive, you can see that they have thought in depth about precisely what had most impact.

They still write lots of practice answers. But, they were less likely to treat their teacher as a partner. They tend not ask their teacher to mark and give feedback.

They are focused on reading top grade answers. However, they also realise that learning and practising essay plans can be nearly as effective as writing essays. Also, you can revise a lot more this way.

Literature

They focus on high value knowledge – the author’s purpose, context, alternative interpretations, key quotes and specific vocabulary to use in the exam.

Language

Some do plan answers and write them in advance for question 5.

Tactics

They are less likely than grade 9 students to think about the order in which to answer questions. But they are likely to practise writing speed.

Grade 7 Top Techniques

Grade	**7**
Practice Answers	**3**
Memorise **Essay Plans**	**3**
Limit Quotes to high value	**3**
Learn **Context** for writer's purpose	**3**
Pre-plan Q5	**2**
Teacher Marking	**2**
Learn **alternative interpretations** of quotes (including flash cards)	**2**
ChatGPT to write	**1**
Mind Maps	**1**
Read lots of books	**1**
Pre-write Q5	**1**
Story	**1**
Description	**1**
Fastest Hand	**1**
MAD FATHERS CROCH	**1**
PRTEZEL	**1**

My Thoughts

The number of grade 7 students who replied to me was only 11, so we can't read too much into this table.

But, we can suggest it is more likely that they did the description compared to students getting grade 8 and 9.

Only 3 out of 11 did practice questions, so this is much less than grade 9 and 8 students.

A higher proportion of them revised only from essay plans.

They didn't understand the importance of writing a thesis statement. They were less likely to learn quotes with the analysis of those quotes at the same time.

They were much less likely to practise writing speed.

None of them bought into the idea that 'points make prizes'.

My claim on my channel is that most students can get top grades. It is just knowing stuff. I could be completely wrong. But reading through all these responses makes me even more certain. What grade 7 students do is not massive, it isn't a giant mountain of revision.

It is actually pretty close to what I would call lazy. Yes, they are spending a long time watching my videos (and I do appreciate that), but they are not spending enough time applying what they know in practice.

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